

# THE GRAIL



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# The Grail

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## THE GRAIL

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## What of the Night

Jerome Palmer, O.S.B.

WHEN this issue of THE GRAIL reaches you, you will be enjoying the good news of the Risen Savior amid the almost ceaseless Alleluias of the Paschal liturgy. But as these lines are being prepared for the printer the sad days of Passiontide are still upon us. True, today we chanted *Hosanna*, as with palms in our hands we walked in procession to the church door and entered to the song of *Rex Israel*. The somber chant of the Passion mingled, however, with the *Hosannas* and we knew that the shouts of "Crucify Him!" and "Away with this man!" were more sincere than "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

Looking out, tonight, on the darkened world, there is no indication of an Easter dawn. The Paschal moon may be shining but it is behind heavy clouds; there will be rain and wind and possibly frost ere the dancing sun of Easter comes over the horizon.

Tonight the miners are still "on holiday" and while loyalty to their unions makes many of them seem willing participants, it is well known that most of them are feeling keenly the prolonged idleness. We have grown accustomed to these labor

stoppages and are becoming resigned—if uncomfortably so—to the inevitable spiral that must result in towering prices. Like seasick passengers we have almost reached the stage of locking ourselves in our staterooms and awaiting the worst.

This past week we have seen the UNO trying to feel that it has safely shot the rapids and emerged without serious loss of prestige from the Iranian-Russian dispute. Now, while closing its ears and eyes to Marshal Tito's reign of terror in Yugoslavia, it is asked to turn its guns on Franco as a kind of whipping-boy. Spain, Poland (*Red Poland*) alleges, is a threat to the

world. There are Communists in every country of the world, armed troops in all of Europe and Asia, and then forsooth, Spain threatens the peace of the world by moving troops to the French frontier—within her own borders. Franco is harboring German scientists, it is said, to work on secret weapons. Aren't German scientists busy in Russia and the United States on the same project? There is, then, no threat to world security in the Communist uprisings in Greece in an attempt to intimidate the voters to stay away from the polls! There is no threat to world peace in the interference of the Communists in the formation of a new Bulgarian cabinet! What kind of sponsor of world peace is Russia to close the polls to all but Communists in Berlin when holding a "plebiscite" to decide whether there should be a merger between Communists and Socialists?

Elsewhere in the world, too, are emanating saddening reports. Read Marieli Benziger's article on page 140 of this month's GRAIL. Herbert Hoover, arriving in Helsinki after a three-day trip through unhappy Poland, announced that five million Polish children are starving. That many millions of Catholics are starving spiritually in the western



Ukraine, having been torn from the Mother Church by a gigantic hoax.

Far from Europe's desolate cities and plains another plague threatens China, and the worst famine in modern times is ravaging India. Those poor people have not yet recovered from the severe famine of 1943 in which three million died of starvation. In a single village of five hundred families a traveler reports that only twelve families ate three meals a day; 116 families ate twice a day; 217 once a day; 60 ate one meal in two days, 85 one meal in three days, and the others less frequently. These statistics were repeated in almost every report from Travancore. Today the inhabitants

11,537 rapes; 6,847 murders, and 4,387 cases of negligent manslaughter. "That," the Department of Justice statisticians tell us, "is a major crime every 20 seconds. Each day 149 persons were robbed, 662 cars were stolen, 881 places were burglarized, in addition to a daily average of 2,371 other thefts." Of the 543,852 persons arrested 21% were minors. Among all arrested 17-year old's predominated; 18-year old's came next. The increase in crime since Pearl Harbor is 350%!

These statistics, of course, represent only the crimes which were reported and tried. The number of murders through abortions is not included, yet they must be counted

persecution. Not only do sneering letters of unbelievers reflect the scorn for God's warnings, but sometimes these blasphemous thoughts find their way into print. Pardon us for reproducing here one such blast from hell. It is from the pen of Langston Hughes, affiliated with forty-nine interlocking organizations that are communist-front or communist controlled. We shudder to print it.

Good-by, Christ Jesus,  
Lórd, God, Jehovah,  
Beat it on away from here,  
Make way for a new guy with no  
religion at all,  
A real guy named "Marx Communist,"



of this vast section of India are receiving about 960 calories per day; undernourishment begins at 2000 calories. Death from starvation results at 800 calories. It is estimated that from ten to twenty million persons are starving there.

We in America are not starving. We are not even in want—physically. If we were, strikes would cease. But a worse plague by far has struck America, the worst plague of immorality this country has ever known. It is not uncommon to find three and four lurid accounts of sexual crimes in a single newspaper. The FBI reports for last year 1,565,541 major police crimes against property and person; 856,521 larcenies; 321,672 burglaries; 241,491 auto thefts; 54,279 robberies; 59,807 aggravated assaults;

when we are trying to weigh the crimes against Almighty God. Also included should be the literally countless sex crimes in large sections of our cities open to that kind of vice. Extracts from letters printed in *The Priest* for April reveal the almost unbelievable extent to which men can go in seeking sinful gratification of the flesh.

This is the cloudy sky hovering over us as we enter Holy Week of 1946. The sadness of Our Saviour at the Last Supper and the sacrifice He went forth to offer on Calvary are understandable. For the Eternal Truth all things are present. As He prostrated in the Garden of Gethsemane the chalice which could not pass from Him was filled with the bitter drink of twentieth century indifference, scoffing, and downright

Lenin Peasant  
Stalin worker, me.  
I said "Me." Go on ahead now  
You are getting  
In the way of things, Lord,  
And step on the gas, Christ.  
Move, and don't be so slow about  
moving.

The world is mine from now on.  
Is it any wonder if thousands of men and women run berserk and roam the streets with axes to revert to vandal type? If America, the land so singularly blessed by God with plenty and liberty, act thus, what is to be said of other lands, where the inhabitants have lived in bondage and servitude for a generation? We were shocked to read William Henry Chamberlin's account of "The Rape of Berlin" in *The New Leader*. He wrote that in the days



following the Russian occupation of Berlin, it was not uncommon for women to be violated as often as thirty times. "There were fearful mutilations of the women; and an epidemic of suicides broke out. On the whole I would say that about half the women in Berlin have been outraged ...

"... On the second day after the end of the fighting the two thousandth woman who had been violated was treated in the Gertrude hospital. Then an order came to take medical measures against venereal diseases. What I have seen is unforgettable. I was shaken to the depths. I know from Frenchmen who came from Poland and Austria that the same sort of thing happened there..."

From the way matters are now shaping themselves it looks as if Spain will again be submitted to this kind of rule, and with the devastation again in that country, we may see Europe completely leveled by the hammer and the sickle. All the warnings that have been sounded seem to be in vain. One plea after another from the righteous goes unheeded.

#### WHAT TO DO?

As in every other crisis of history it is our heavenly Mother who comes to encourage us. Certainly she is not going to condone the vices and crimes she sees. Rather like a true mother she points out the dangerous pitfalls and tells us what we may do to save ourselves. By this time all GRAIL readers are familiar with the series of apparitions at Fatima, Portugal, from May to October, 1917. When the sun ceased to spin in the sky and the miraculous phenomena that had been foretold faded from sight, though 70,000 persons witnessed the marvels, the world in general walked away with a shrug of the shoulders and the attitude of one saying, "Nice show, eh?"

Mary was not in the show business! One of the three children favored at Fatima by our Lady's visits is still living and as she is told to do so she makes known more

and more of the secrets of Fatima. The Church with great prudence has not yet seen fit to publish all of the revelations. As is stated in chapter six of the recent book *More About Fatima* by Rev. V. Montes de Oca, C.S.Sp., the prodigies are only a means of proving the heavenly origin of the message of Fatima. The important thing is not the miracle of the sun or the rose petals or the cures. It is to put into practice and to spread the recommendations of Our Lady.

When we notice the open rebellion against God and His laws we must admit that the sins of the modern world have become too great. "Men stupidly deify the flesh, and coldly refuse to recognize Christ and His Church, God and His laws. As in the time of Noah man's malice cried to heaven for vengeance and brought the deluge upon the earth, so the sins of the modern world have finally provoked the Divine Justice, which has decided to drown this wicked world in a new deluge of blood and fire.

"Moved with pity the Blessed Virgin interceded with her Divine Son, and obtained from the Divine Mercy a truce, a postponement of the chastisement. In spite of the wonderful prodigies which accompanied them, this heavenly counsel was not sufficiently heeded, and the Divine Justice has resumed its course in a war still more horrible."

There are three parts to Our Lady's message: first, penance and giving up of sin; second, the fervent praying of the rosary; third, dedication to her Immaculate Heart and the devotion of the First Saturdays. Commenting on the call to penance, the one surviving of the three recipients of the revelation has this to say: "The part of this last apparition which has remained most deeply imprinted on my heart is the prayer of our heavenly Mother begging us not to offend any more Almighty God Who is already offended too much. What a loving reproach is contained in these words, what tender pleading. Oh, I wish I could



#### JOYFUL MYSTERIES

*Annunciation*—Mary's humility and purity won for her the place as Mother of God. With the honor and privilege came also the acceptance of suffering and obedience to the will of God. This made her prayer almost all-powerful. Ask her intercession for sinners. (OVER)



#### SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

*Agony in the Garden*—The Apostles sleep; (OVER)



#### GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

*Resurrection*—Even death, the dread conqueror, fails to separate Mary long from (OVER)

**Cut out pictures along the dotted lines and keep them in your prayer-book.**

**Visitation**—Our Mother's love for her cousin led her to the hill country to share with Elizabeth her great happiness. St. John in his mother's womb responded to the approach of his Maker in the womb of Mary. Already Mary had become the Vessel of election, the House of God, and Ark of the Covenant. Beg her to bring Christ again to a sinful world.

**Birth of Jesus**—Mary's joy knew no bounds when she held to her pure heart the Infant Son of God. The poverty of the stable vanished; the darkness of night was illuminated by heavenly light; the loneliness was broken by angelic visitors. Surrounded by simple shepherds and wealthy kings Christ called all men to Himself. Pray that today all may find their way to the Son of God through Mary.

**Presentation of Jesus**—It is the Offertory of the first Holy Mass. Mary shared the joy of giving the first perfect act of homage to the Father on the part of His created world. She entered upon her role of co-redemptrix. Beg her to pray for those who refuse to worship.

**Finding of Jesus in the Temple**—The joy of Mary and Joseph at the recovery of Jesus after a three-day separation enables Mary to understand the sinner's loss when separated from his God. Ask her to pray for all fallen-away Catholics that they may experience a similar joy of reunion.

Judas is skulking in the shadows; only Mary's heart beat in sympathy with Jesus's at this bitter hour. She, too, is thought to have shed blood in anguish at her Son's sorrow. May her suffering move Jesus to pardon all sinners.

**Scourging**—The blows that should have fallen on us were dealt to Jesus. In return the mercy that should have been shown to Him is granted to us. The sword foretold by Simeon was piercing Mary's heart. May Jesus's love for her move Him to pardon sinners.

**Crowning with thorns**—Kingship is always dearly bought, but Jesus paid many times for His Mary the Queen, and Jesus our King are desirous of a large kingdom—the souls of all. Let us not hesitate to give ourselves to them.

**Carrying of the Cross**—Mary, Queen of Martyrs, saw her Son beneath His load as He passed to Calvary. What pangs she suffered should console all mothers whose children have gone to death, for no one can understand like Mary what sorrow it is to lose a child. May she lose none of her adopted children.

**Death on the Cross**—Mary had been given to us as our Mother in a last word of her Son. She will not fail that trust and we must not fail ours. Pray for all outside of the true Church.

her Divine Son. And she awaits the spiritual resurrection of all her children now dead in sin, to share with them the joys of the resurrection.

**Ascension**—There is no regret now at Jesus's going to the Father, for it is in preparation for eternal reunion. Mary will pray that with her will go a vast host of saved souls into the Father's house.

**Descent of the Holy Ghost**—The one purpose of this new pledge of love on the part of the Father and Son is to instruct us and lead us to salvation. It is Mary's motherhood universalized. The Holy Spirit that overshadowed her is now the Spirit of the whole Church. Mary has officially become the Mother of all elect.

**Assumption**—Untainted by earth or sin, Mary's body is borne by angels to its place in heaven. There at Jesus's side she continues her prayer for sinners—And she will not pray in vain.

**Coronation**—The Queen of Heaven has come into her own. All sufferings, humiliations, hardships are forgotten and eternal union with her Divine Spouse and Son can never know another sorrow. May we become fit subjects here and happy sharers in her joy hereafter.

make it re-echo throughout the entire world for all the children of our heavenly Mother to hear."

Jacinta before her death spoke most eloquently to her teacher: "The sins of the world are too great! The sins which lead most souls to hell are the sins of the flesh!... Oh! Men must do penance! If they amend their lives Our Lord will still pardon the world; but if they do not, the chastisement will come!"

The daily papers and the increase of crime as well as the attacks on the Church from all quarters bespeak only too loudly our neglect of this first petition. The second, about which the Blessed Mother had very much to say, was the praying of the Rosary. That was the one lesson that was not a secret. It was repeated over and over. The children were instructed how to pray it and always to add after each decade the prayer: "O Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, and lead all souls to heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy." In this prayer the element of expiation was united with the frequent praying of the Rosary. And when at last the Blessed Mother revealed who she was, it was in the words: "I am Our Lady of the Rosary."

Another devout mystic of our day, Father Lamy, apostle of the Red suburb of Paris, always had his rosary in his hand. "When you go about saying the Rosary," he said, "you have nothing to fear. It is the recitation of the Rosary that makes Lucifer desperate. He is the sworn enemy of the Rosary. Even if I had not the love of God, I should recite the Rosary just to annoy him."

The repeated voices of the Popes in recent years have called attention to the Rosary. Pope Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI all asked for the Rosary. It is time we were heeding.

The third request of Mary also has to do with the Rosary. She asked that the world be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. In general this has been done by Pope Pius XII. It was done officially on October 31, 1942. Individual dioceses and provinces in some in-

stances have also been consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. It remains for parishes and individuals to do likewise. This can best be done by the practice which Mary herself outlines. She has asked that we devote to her the First Saturday of each month for five successive Saturdays. On those days she has asked that we go to confession, receive Holy Communion, recite the Rosary, and keep her company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation.

The Infant Jesus appeared to Lucy (now Sister Lucy of the Seven Dolors) and asked her to spread this devotion and not to allow herself to be stopped by the difficulties pointed out by confessors, because with God's help they would be easily overcome. Mary told her, "Announce in my name that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months, go to confession, receive holy Communion, recite the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation."

Can any sincere Catholic ignore this request on the part of our Heavenly Mother? For the convenience of our readers a few points for meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary are printed on this page. Cut out the points and put them in your prayer book, and begin at once the habit of devoting Saturdays to Mary, especially the First Saturday of each month. It is not a guess, or an imagined formula. It is the message of heaven itself on what can save the world in its terrible plight.

Here are your dates. Mark them on your calendar:

1. May 4 (day after first Friday)
2. June 1 (week before first Friday)
3. July 6 (day after first Friday)
4. Aug. 3 (day after first Friday)
5. Sept. 7 (day after first Friday)
- [6. October 5 (day after first Friday) In case you don't make it for May.]

## Between the Lines

# Christianity's Social Obligations

H. C. McGinnis

**M**OSCOW'S campaign against the rest of the world is two-pronged. One of her objectives is to make herself a strong nationalist State. Formerly decrying nationalism as a chief cause of world unrest, she is now practicing the direct opposite of what she preached. To those twisted-minded persons who admire successful imperialism, Moscow's current brand of it must be a marvel to behold. Her appetite for territory seems insatiable as she daily pushes her borders outward. Last month, Stalin, in replying to Churchill's Missouri speech, taunted both his opponent and the rest of the world by admitting that all Europe is already "under attack" by Moscow. The second prong of Moscow's campaign is international. She still seeks the world revolution advocated by Marx and Lenin.

As individuals we can do little about her first objective. As private citizens our voices are lost in the world-clamor as Russia takes over one helpless people after another. But the main resistance against her second objective lies mainly with us as individuals. For this second objective is to supplant society's moral order with atheism. She knows that she can never enjoy the luscious political and economic fruits which she seeks to pluck from the rest of the world until she has first destroyed all allegiance to the religious principle and its morality. To achieve this, she takes full advantage of every whit of that irreligion which is spreading so rapidly. While a world-revolution is admittedly needed, it should be a revolution to renew our political, economic, and social order in the spirit of Christ. Moscow seeks a revolution which will convert the world to the spirit of Satan.

**W**E, AS individual Christians, must hold ourselves responsible for atheism's attack upon the moral order, an attack disguised as social reforms. Many of us have neglected the social side of Christ's teachings. We have missed the vigor, to say nothing of the beauty, of the New Testament's social doctrines. Some people have seemingly missed these doctrines altogether. Yet we know that of the Two Great Commandments, one covers man's social obligations. In Christ's recorded teachings, just about one-half cover man's social conduct. The fact that one-half of Christ's utterances concern social conduct and that seven of the Ten Commandments do likewise should prove to us the importance we should attach to Christianity's social laws as enunciated by Scripture. Christ laid upon man a definite social obligation. This obligation is to establish and maintain a good social order in which man can achieve his eternal destiny under the best possible circumstances. That man may be able to establish a proper social order the Creator has endowed him with faculties which he must use to the utmost to follow the pattern so clearly depicted in the Gospel. Too many Christians try to pray a Christian social order into existence. The true Christian both prays and works; and prays while he works. As a Catholic writer said recently, man must pray as if everything depends upon God and must work as if everything depends upon himself.

Is the Christian social order as set forth in the Gospel a futile thing, devoid of all vigor? Is the religious pattern of social life really an "opium for the people" as Marx and Lenin declared? Is it moss-grown, out-dated? One would think so from the way in which so many persons



H. C. McGinnis

appear to shun it. What right, then, do we justly have when we proclaim Christianity society's most dynamic force? Let us look at just a few examples. Today we hear much about man's brotherhood. Many misguided persons believe this ideal to be a recent product of man's social evolution. Did they never hear of the **OUR FATHER**? "Give us this day *our* daily bread; and forgive *us our* trespasses as *we* forgive those who trespass against *us*." There is no Individualism there. The doctrine of man's mutual interdependence is a Christian doctrine. This brotherhood and interdependence is again exemplified in the doctrine of the Mystical Body, which is a clear blueprint of the Christian ideal in social matters.

Christian social doctrines are not moss-grown, as so many believe. They are literally centuries ahead of the present day and its thinking. In many nations the citizens do not yet admit any responsibility to the national common good. When they do, they pride themselves on being quite advanced. When today's individual really believes in, and perceives the workings of, the *international* common good, he thinks he is far, far

ahead of his day and age. Yet St. Augustine wrote in *Contra Faustum* in the 5th century that while nations have their own prerogatives, when these national rights interfere with the international common good, the nation must submit itself to the good of world-society. How different today's world would be, had the world's people followed this Christian doctrine instead of losing sight of it for centuries! The Catholic who knows his Church's social teachings, from the time of Christ on, sees nothing new in the doctrine of the supremacy of world-society when he hears it advocated by today's statesmen who call themselves very advanced in their ideals.

**W**ITH atheism threatening to sweep the moral order out of existence and with pagan doctrines of various kinds daily undermining the proper concept of society, we must awaken to our obligation to strive for the Christian concept of society, not only as citizens, but mainly as Christians. With one-half of the Gospel's teachings setting forth man's social obligations, we no longer dare give mere lip service to the social duties proclaimed by Christ. Perhaps we should read understandingly the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, in which Christ pictures the Last Judgment, when all the nations shall be gathered together and the sheep separated from the goats. In depicting this Judgment, Christ mentioned only one test—the fulfillment by man of his social obligations. He mentioned several instances of man's neglect of his fellow-man's social welfare and then said, "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to Me."

**A**S WE look about us, we cannot miss the fact that society hunger for a change in its social order. This hunger is a confession of weakness, that the existing order has failed. The world has suffered too much from Individualism and its materialism. Its following of this false prophet of freedom has brought it to the very depths of misery. Now it seeks a new social pattern. Unfortunately, however,

the patterns being offered to it most forcefully are pagan patterns, patterns which will ultimately bring even a greater misery than that now being suffered. Yet only a few years ago, Pius XI told us what all Christians know to be true: that society's reconstruction must be preceded by a profound renewal of the Christian spirit. Society must renew itself in the spirit of Christ if it is to escape the destruction it now faces.

Many persons, particularly Americans, feel convinced that they are doing their full share in bringing the spirit of Christ to the world. But many of these people have fallen into a most grievous error. They mistake Humanitarianism for Christliness. Perhaps this error is easy to make, especially for those who have no constant contact with the Real Presence. Humanitarianism is entirely compatible with secularism and today's America is, generally speaking, a victim of secularism. Secularism is the very antithesis of the religious principle. Hence, in our striving to establish a new social order based upon Christian morality we dare not mistake Humanitarianism for Christian love and a practice of the pattern of the Mystical Body. One can be a first-rate Humanitarian and a Deist at the same time; but Deism is not Christianity. Deism can save neither the soul of the individual nor society. The very kindest thing one can possibly say about it is that it is a devitalized denatured attempt at religion which has been so depleted of real virtue that it has lost most of its power for good.

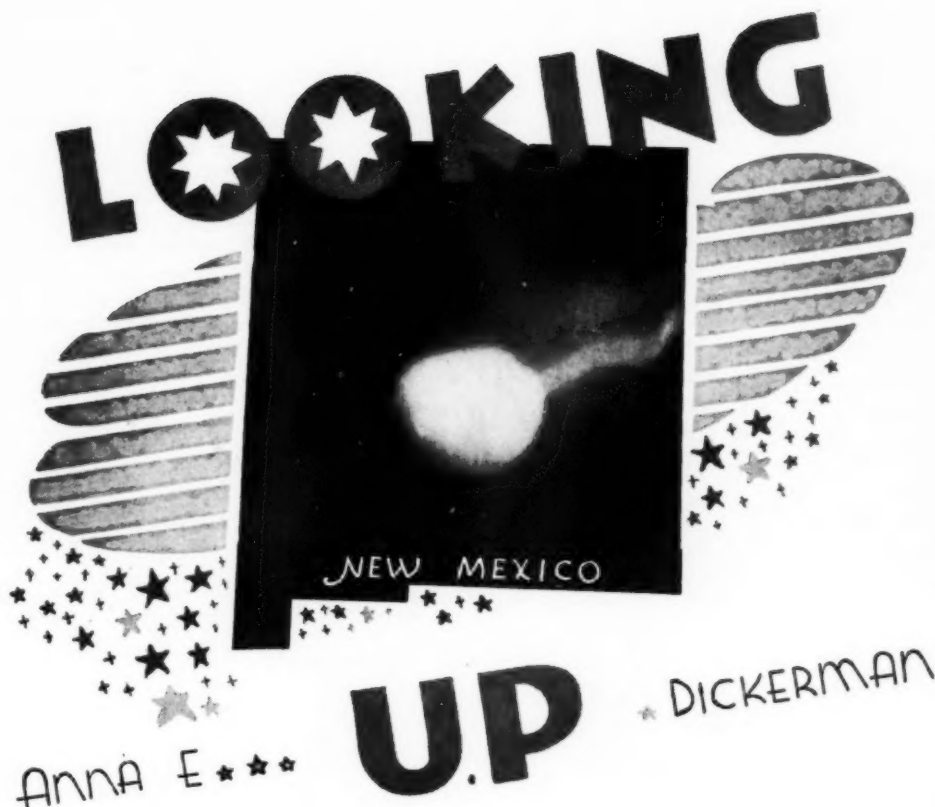
**W**HILE a humanitarian form of secularism is not the answer to society's woes or a safe bulwark against spreading atheism, neither is the mouthing of platitudes by Christians the answer. Platitudes concerning man's social conduct and what he ought to do, when not accompanied by an offering of a practical solution to the day's political, economic, and social ills, mean nothing. If anything, this type of Christian verbal activity breeds a disdain of Christianity and its power for good. To piously mouth the

truth that every man is his brother's keeper without giving a plan whereby man can practice this ideal in today's complex and much-twisted world is to breed the suspicion among others that Christianity is a wishy-washy, impractical philosophy of life. Injustices cannot be wiped out by high-sounding ideals when offered without a plan by which they can be put into practice.

Where can we find the Christian plan for society? First we find a very general, over-all plan, one uttered for all times and all situations, in the Gospel's social teachings. However, these teachings do not give immediate applications to our present economic and social injustices, but set forth the general moral principles which must apply. More specific applications are to be found in the Social Encyclicals and in the utterances of Catholic social writers. Since Christianity is society's most dynamic force, we can expect to find some of the proposals made by the Catholic social program sounding quite daring in the light of today's conception of man's inherent rights. This is because man's ideals of true justice have become badly tarnished through association with false doctrines. During the past four centuries man has strayed so far from society's true nature and purpose that the pattern of justice as established by the Creator now sounds most daring and radical. As a result, the reforms now being advanced by the Christian social program are far ahead of the present times and constitute a pattern which must be grown into.

Atheistic Communism has made its boast that it will drive all religion, even the very memory of religion, into oblivion. The battle between Christ and anti-Christ is now coming up. As we Christians do our individual parts as soldiers in the Army of the Church Militant, we must intensify our practices of Christianity. These practices are two-fold: first, the living of personal holiness; second, the fulfillment of our social obligations as given by Christ. Communism doesn't stand a chance when faced with Christianity practiced in all its aspects.





THE average person glances at the night sky merely for weather indications. Whittier looked, and "the bending walls of sapphire blazed with the thought of God." Learn to be a stargazer and you will be given mental wings that will enable you to fly high above all your problems; and at any moment something unusual, interesting, beautiful, or spectacular, or a combination of any or all of these, may come within the range of your vision, while your less observant friends will deplore: "Oh, how I wish I had seen it!"

The stars are so far away that the most powerful telescopes reveal only the light sent out and not the actual surface. Could we stand on the planet Neptune, the sentinel outpost of our solar system, we would be nearly two billion, eight hundred million miles from the sun and yet apparently no nearer the fixed stars than we seem on Earth. The heavens, with the exception of the planets, would present but few changes. Light moves at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, but astronomers measure distance by the space traveled by a ray of light in

Rare photo of a meteor as it flashed across New Mexico in 1933. The picture was taken by Mr. C. M. Brown, with whose permission it is here reproduced. The meteor fell to earth about 35 miles from the place where it was photographed.

one year, which is six trillions of miles, and use the term "a light year." The light from our nearest stellar neighbor, Alpha of the constellation Centaur, requires four and a half years to reach us and is 25 1/2 trillion miles from us. Our sun and its family of planets is traveling towards Vega, which is 160 trillion miles distant. As we gaze at this beautiful, blue, first magnitude star, imagination cannot grasp the fact that the light we see set out from it more than twenty-six years ago.

Many of the smallest stars visible to the naked eye seem small only because of their inconceivable distance. Compared with most of these orbs, our sun pales into insignificance; our earth is a mere pinhead in space. We may well exclaim with the

poet: "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

The planets are not to be confused with the fixed stars. They are our sun's own "children." The word planet means "wanderer" and the planets constantly change their position while the "fixed" stars remain the same in their relation to one another.

To the early astronomers, handicapped by lack of instruments, the movement of the planets was puzzling in the extreme and they had all sorts of fanciful ideas to account for it. Galileo in the early sixteen-hundreds, invented a crude telescope made of a piece of lead pipe with a lens set at

The light of the moon is but one-six-hundred-thousandth of that of the sun, and an entire sky of full moons would not equal broad day-light. The moon itself is a dark body, shining only by reflecting light from the sun. The lunar days and nights are fifteen times longer than our own. The surface of the moon which is directly exposed to the sun's rays is heated to the boiling point by day, while the temperature during the lunar night falls to probably two hundred degrees below zero.

It is thought that the moon may once have occupied the bed of our Pacific ocean. It is 2,160 miles in diameter. More than one thousand mountains of the moon have been measured and some



each end. Instead of seeing only the six thousand stars which those of us with the keenest sight do, the dark spots of the sky came to life with countless glittering worlds. Yet there were people who refused to look through his telescope lest they fall victims to Galileo's "magic."

When, like Longfellow, we "gaze from our windows at night, and the welkin above is all white;—all throbbing and panting with stars"—we are looking upon worlds in every stage of development from the gaseous nebula which is a sun unformed and unborn, to our strange satellite, the moon, on which the fires of existence are believed to have slowly burned out.

The spiral nebula of Andromeda is an island universe 905,000 light years away in miles, 603 followed by 16 zeroes. It is the most distant object seen with the naked eye. This photograph is by M. Quénisset of Juvisy Observatory, France.

exceed 25,000 feet in height. The moon's surface is deeply pitted with craters; whether from volcanic action or the impact of meteors has not been determined. Thirty thousand craters have been counted, ranging in size from the very small to 150 miles across.

Nothing is more terrifying to the superstitious than "signs" in the sky. A comet in every age has

been an omen of famine, war, pestilence and the death of rulers. A comet usually consists of three parts: the nucleus, a bright point in the center of the head; the coma or hair, which is a bright mass surrounding the nucleus; and the tail, a luminous streamer, extending in a direction opposite the sun. Comets, however, may lack a nucleus or a tail, or on the contrary, may have several tails, but the word applies when they revolve in regular orbits around the sun.

There are millions of comets within the solar system but they lack size and brilliancy and cannot be seen. In 1680 a comet appeared of such awful grandeur that in Europe a medal was distributed with the inscription: "The star threatens evil things; trust only; God will turn them to good." In America, the comet was visible in daylight and meetings were called in the settlements to urge repentance and to name a day for prayer and fasting. In 1811 a comet of great magnificence had a head 112,000 miles in diameter; a nucleus of four hundred miles; and a fan shape tail, spreading over 112 million miles. This comet is due to return in thirty centuries. Mind stands appalled at the thought. Thirty centuries, flashing through space

beyond the farthestmost bounds of the universe as we know it, yet guided so surely on its swift, bright way that it will return at the time appointed, within the fraction of a second.

Comets shine chiefly by their own light and the spectroscope has made it possible to analyze their composition. Hydrocarbons are the principal elements, and iron, sodium, and magnesium exist in a state of vapor. The shape of the tail has to do entirely with the density of these elements. The straightest tails are made so by hydrogen, one of the lightest elements known.

If we could view our globe from a point as near as some of the comets pass, it would look like a very large moon does to us,—larger than the mid-summer moons which loom tremendously against the horizon. The outlines of the continents would be clearly defined and the land masses would be dazzlingly white with occasional slight shades of green, from vegetation. The snow-capped mountain

The Aurora Borealis, commonly known as "Northern Lights." Photo by Prof. Stormer.



peaks and the polar caps would stand out brilliantly. The seas would be grey with a slightly bluish tinge.

There need be no fear of a collision between a comet and the earth, for a comet is finer than the lightest mist and the stars are seen shining through its tail.

Comets sometimes come to grief. On the 29th of October, 1832, Biela's comet was scheduled to cross the orbit of Earth. It came and went as punctually as a crack limited train. In 1846 it was due to return. Surprise was unbounded when *two* comets appeared, side by side, but not touching. The comet had split in two. In 1872 the erratic comet was expected on the night of November 27, but instead of a comet being seen, there was a six hours' rain of shooting stars. 13,892 were counted at the observatory of the Roman College, alone. Astronomers estimate that 160,000 meteors flashed across the sky the world over, all emanating from a point near the bright star Gamma in Andromeda. It was evident that the comet had broken up in minute parts.

Meteors have caused the world's greatest explosions, even surpassing those of the atomic bombs. In June, 1908, possibly the largest meteorite of all time descended in Siberia, laying waste thousands of square miles. It may have been the Pons-Winnecke Comet. It could have struck a glancing blow and rushed on into space or may have penetrated so far below the surface that it will remain hidden as long as our planet endures. Every observatory reported phenomena of one kind or another, from its effects.

An immense amount of time, effort, and money has been spent in a search for the meteorite which fell near Winslow, Arizona, perhaps thousands of years ago, forming the much discussed Meteor Crater. Viewed from the air there is a perfect rim, four thousand feet across. This meteorite penetrated 2500 feet of solid rock and exploded the rock into four

hundred million tons of fragments, while other millions of tons were converted into rock flour, fine enough to sift through a fine-mesh sieve. Great quantities of meteoric fragments have been found in the vicinity.

One of the largest meteorites lies in the open country between Lake Nyasa and Lake Tanganyika, in Africa. It is nearly fourteen feet in length and weighs between seventy and eighty tons. The largest discovered in the United States is the Williamette meteorite, near Portland, Oregon. It weighs between fifteen and sixteen tons and is ten feet long. Admiral Peary brought the famed Ahnighito meteorite, weighing 36 1/2 tons, from Greenland, and it is now exhibited in the Hayden Planetarium and believed to be the largest which the public may view.

There are meteorites from a thousand falls in the museums of the world. Thousands of stones may descend in a single shower. 100,000 were counted in a fall in Poland. In 1912, fourteen thousand fell in the vicinity of Holbrook, Arizona. Most of these were no larger than grape seed, but all had the thin, black, fused crust which identified them. The structure of a meteorite could not be mistaken for anything having its origin on earth.

In 1808, a scientist named Widmanstätten obtained specimens of meteoric iron, polished them and etched them with acid, revealing the design known as the Widmanstätten figures. This test is applied frequently and is accepted as proof of the meteoric character.

Tests made on a number of iron meteorites show that the metal was solidified from a gaseous or liquid state from sixteen million up to nearly three billion years ago and the latter estimate is thought to be roughly the age of the earth and the solar system.

In 1799 the sky literally blazed with meteors, and frightened people, falling on their knees, feared that the end of the world had come. In 1833 there was a similar display, with the meteors as



St. Elmo's Fire on the lightning rods of a mountain observatory in France. Courtesy U. S. Weather Bureau.



numerous as flakes in a snowstorm. Great colored fireballs hung motionless in the sky and meteor trails remained visible for many minutes.

A hundred tons of fine meteoric ash fall daily upon the surface of our globe. Meteors, like the earth and its sister planets revolve around the sun. Some of them are evenly distributed in their orbits, while others collect in dense shoals or swarms. When the earth's orbit intersects that of the meteors, there is a collision and friction is created which converts the meteor into light and heat. If the meteor is a very large body, it is heated unequally and the expansion causes it to explode and fall to earth in fragments large and small. Meteoric iron has been found in practically all countries and supernatural power has always been ascribed to it. In the winter of 1930 a meteorite fell near Paragould, Arkansas, and the explosion was so terrific that people in adjoining States were roused from sleep and thought there had been a local disaster.

The average height of the shooting stars is seventy miles when they appear and fifty miles when they are consumed, but bright as they seem, the weight of most of them does not exceed one grain. Astronomers believe them to be bits of comets and debris of burned out worlds.

Meteorites are in many respects the most fascinating of the flaming mysteries, since they are the only tangible objects which reach our earth from the vast Beyond.

Bombardment of streams of electrons shot earthward from tremendous magnetic storms on the sun, cause the Aurora Borealis, better known as the Northern Lights. The unusual appearance resembles a battery of searchlights, rapidly increasing and fading in intensity. The auroral streamers are visible at altitudes from 60 to 250 miles above the earth. The highest ever measured was six hundred miles above the earth. A display in brilliant colors, turning the entire heavens into a sea of motion is infrequently seen but can never be forgotten by charmed and awed spectators.

St. Elmo's Fire is a celestial prankster. It is a heatless electrical phenomenon which, in the days of sailing ships, shown weirdly on the mastheads and yardarms, giving rise to many superstitions of the deep. Blue flares are negative discharges of electricity; red flares are positive discharges. Sizzling, crackling sounds sometimes accompany a display. Planes were bathed in it under certain weather conditions during the war, and fireballs dancing about at an altitude were thought at times to be secret enemy weapons. It is recorded that an entire army turned and fled when all the spears of an advancing host were tipped with St. Elmo's fire.

Everyone has seen the "sun drawing water" so-

called from the supposition that the sun is drawing up vapor from bodies of water. The nautical term is "the sun's backstays" and the explanation is that dust particles in the air are illuminated by sunlight through rifts in the clouds.

A sun dog is a mock sun appearing in the form of a bright light near the sun. It is often tinged with rainbow colors and occasionally has a luminous train. Technically it is known as a parhelion. Two or more parhelia are generally observed at the same time in connection with solar haloes. All are due to the presence of ice crystals in the air.

One of the conveniences we fail to appreciate is the clock. Before clocks were invented, the common methods of telling time were by the sundial; the clepsydra, which measured time by the regulated flow of water in an instrument designed for the purpose; and the stars. In one of the Greek tragedies written earlier than 400 B.C. the question is asked: "What is the star now passing?" and the answer: "The Pleiades show themselves in the East; the Eagle soars in the summit of heaven."

In cloudy and stormy weather, the time was largely a matter of guesswork. Certain monks were known to measure it by the number of psalms that could be said in one hour, having determined this by practice with the sundial when the day was clear. As late as A.D. 1108, the sacristan of the Abbey of Cluny summoned the monks to their midnight prayers by the position of the stars.

It has been beautifully said that "by an evident plan of the Creator, even in the most common affairs of life we are compelled to look for guidance from the shifting, impermanent objects of earth, to the faithful, abiding heavens above."



Williamette Meteorite found near Oregon City in 1902. This is the largest single meteorite found in the United States. It weighs 15 and a half tons. Courtesy American Museum of Natural History, New York.

## A FERVENT PLEA FOR FRANCE

MARIELL G. BENZIGER

# *Will Hammer and Sickle Replace the Tricolor?*

**H**AVE we Americans been lulled into a false sense of security? Do we really believe there is peace on the continent of Europe? All of Europe starves! All of Europe shivers! Once again Europe trembles! A few months ago we disbelieved the rumor we heard: "By summer the Soviet Union will be firmly established on the Rhineland." Russia is one of the GREAT FOUR. Russia is our ally. Washington reassured us that the reconstruction of Europe was well under way. Yet there are very strange tales of horror coming from Poland, the Balkans, Hungary, and the section of Austria under Soviet domination. Are we not co-partners pledged to uphold the Atlantic Charter, harbingers of world peace? Yet the first-hand stories of cruelty, rape, and murder that dominate in whatever tone the hammer and sickle fly, remind one of Nazi cruelties. Once again all of Europe is plunged into an endless vigil of fear. Those dreams of a real and lasting

peace have vanished. The rumble of war grows more oppressing. The pulse of Europe beats with fear, a fear we had hoped never, never again to experience. That fear is here. People begin to talk in whispers. Spies again trail one everywhere.

We sensed something was frightfully wrong the moment we set foot on the continent of Europe. Just what was wrong was not discernible at first. Time alone has enlightened us. London is merely one hour's flying distance from Paris. Yet the difference between these two cities is as marked as that between night and day. This difference is to be found everywhere on the continent. The peoples of Britain are sane and normal in their reactions. Those of the once occupied countries *are not*. They are ill. Mentally, morally and physically they suffer from having been entombed for years on end, from having been beaten, muzzled, spied upon and dominated. This marked contrast was all the more

evident as we spent half of the VJ celebrations in London, the second part in Paris. Coming into Paris was like walking into a morgue.

On August 15, 1945, all of London celebrated. Tons of waste paper littered the streets. The Piccadilly Circus crowd was the largest in history. We wedged our way inch by inch, elbow to elbow. London sang, it danced in one hilarious riot. Oh no, it was not a drunken brawl. The event was too momentous, too sacred. English soldiers and GI's arm in arm marched down Regent street. They shouted themselves hoarse each time the King and Queen appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. All night long these crowds kept their vigil for another peep at royalty who constantly reappeared to acknowledge the tumultuous reception. We had seen London by day; it was grimy, battle scarred, down at the heel. Its people had pinched faces, shabby clothes, bare legs. We had tasted some of their sorrow, had seen some of the appalling damage they had borne without a word of complaint for five long years, these people who had managed even until then on only two square meals a day. Six hundred thousand London homes had vanished, crumbled into dust. No one counted those so damaged by fire and bombing that they were unsafe for human habitation, would cost a fortune to repair. We who had arrived by Clipper on a relief mission had become glass conscious and bomb crater conscious. Yet all the nightmare of those years of waiting for victory were forgotten in our joint celebration. That terror and tension that had weighed like a pall over the British Isles had lifted. There was peace. Everyone was talking of settling down to normal living. All the young girls in the service were planning on how soon they could get married; the men on how soon they could take off their uniforms. That's how England felt about it.

On that memorable night of nights we sat in a battle-scarred home on Harley Street. We were one of a crowd of women in uniform. Some were very young, some a little older. All were tired, two of the group ill from overwork. Our genial host, a man in his late seventies, was a noted doctor of famous Harley Street. His home and office a block away had been blitzed. Since that frightful day when London was first blitzed he had never been his own master. His wife became a war casualty; his only son died in action, yet he had

not lost his sense of humor. In 1940 when for eighty-seven consecutive nights the Nazis dropped their high explosives on the city Dr. Barnardo had never gone to bed, never removed his clothes. Those ten-hour raids lasted from black-out to dawn. As he was assigned to a district near Harley Street he was busy attending the dead and wounded, injecting morphine, trying to save as many as possible. During those horrible nights he often cared for as many as 150; sometimes the numbers reached 300. By day he would probe their wounds for glass splinters, busy till the next attack. Dr. Barnardo is one of those unsung heroes revered and respected for his fearless courage, his enduring grit. It was he who turned the dials as we heard the King broadcast to the Empire. In the room the pale, tired, pinched faces became transformed. They glowed with pride, with gratitude; there were tears in all eyes as their Sovereign spoke his humble thanks to them and to the nation. We who had come from America, where war had not scarred our towns, nor battered our shores, felt happy to think it had been our privilege to witness this remarkable scene. We sensed it was this grit, this tenacity, this daring courage that had never admitted defeat that brought about the victory we were facing on August 15. Since we have been in Europe we are confident that without the British Isles as a rampart there would be no Europe today—all would have been swallowed up in the Third Reich.

Early on the morning of August 16, the streets were still packed with joyful soldiers. The Atlantic Transport Command had ordered us to report at once for our flight to Paris. We flew across in one of those *Fighting Dakotas* still arrayed in battle dress. Only as we began to circle Paris did we sense something was wrong. What could have happened to this once proud metropolis? This had been the center of Europe towards which had converged the peoples of North and South America. The peoples of the world had looked to France for inspiration in art, in literature, in fashion. As our plane circled over the city we recognized familiar land-marks. Paris had once been our home. During fourteen years we had lived close to its people, had come and gone as one of them. Barely an hour before, all of London was shouting itself hoarse, celebrating *Victory*, its streets bright with bunting, its people all rejoicing. From a plane nothing is hidden. Every dot was a marked object. What had happened to Paris? Not a human being was visible. The streets were ribbons of dust on which was neither beast nor man. Was this a city of the dead?

Orley Field was busy with the drone of American planes. Outside the airport there were no taxis, no horses, no busses. The puny Frenchmen who lolled about made no effort to help us with our bags. A sputtering bus marked for U.S. Army drew up. This was filled to overflowing with soldiers. We took our place and then tore through deserted streets into the Place de la Concorde. There were no flags on that August 16 in Paris, no rejoicing on the streets. The people hid furtively behind closed doors and drawn shutters. The empty stores were barricaded. Was this the gay Paris our American press had told us about, the city of laughter and bright colors?

We looked at each other; we were crying. That sense of futility, that lump in our throat left us depressed. We were seized with the sort of grief that comes in the loss of one near and dear. Here were the living dead. This was stark tragedy. These emaciated, emasculated, sick people seemed ashamed to look at us. They avoided us as if they had some dread disease. Paris that August was a city of hunger. We had heard about its crowded cafés which were indicative that conditions could not be so bad. The cafés might be crowded, yet only the initiated knew that the very people sitting before a small glass of *vin ordinaire*—which is the cheapest beverage—for a whole hour, sneaked out of their purses or pockets a piece of stale black bread to munch furtively. We had our meal opposite the Gare du Nord. Here simple folk ate. The menu ranged from 75 francs to 150 francs—for omelet made of egg powder, 2 slices of raw tomatoes—watery potatoes and a pear. This had been one of the great European railway centers. Now there was no traffic. No taxis, no cars, no busses, not even horses drew up to unload. The porters who had once fought for trade were gone. There was silence. A few women stood at a gate waiting hopefully for husbands or sons—a train with returning French prisoners of war was pulling in. Only the American GI strode about. A group of our Negro boys in uniform carried some 50 pairs of workmen's shoes slung across their backs. Everyone eyed them jealously. Shoes like that had not been seen since the occupation. Jeeps whisked in and out of streets at breakneck speed. In a city where only Americans had cars there had already been a casualty list of 500 civilians. A white dog, someone's pet who had escaped the Nazis was run over before our eyes. A U.S. army truck driven by one of our soldiers who did not even put on his brakes, acting as if it were customary to careen through a town the size of New York at sixty miles an hour. Men and women, even nuns and priests pedaled past us on bicycles loaded

with sacks, baskets and babies. Other people were dragging tired looking children. No one had stockings; they clopped about on wooden shoes. These had been painted in gay colors to simulate leather. The bare legs were dirty. Paris was soapless. Most of its women suffered from varicose veins, the children from horrible skin diseases due to malnutrition. Only those who have limped through Paris on foot can appreciate the suffering the Parisians have endured. The invaders had stolen everything. They had carted away horses, carriages, cars, and busses. Even the trolleys had vanished. There were a few cabs to be found; these were lined up in Place de l'Opera. We had our choice of ten lean horses about ready to drop. For the equivalent of ten dollars we drove the short distance from there to the station, just because we sturdy Americans were too tired to take another step! When we came to pay our *cocher*, who looked as tired as did his horse, and who had fought in the resistance, he told us instead of money he'd gladly take food. But we had none.

Our first night in Paris, the second VJ day of rejoicing—was a very sober one. The French were in no celebrating mood. They were honest in saying, "This is not our victory. You speak of victory, but where is peace? Where is the security that comes with peace?" The Champs Elysées was deserted. In the twilight from the Arc de Triomphe we overlooked a freed city, which only a short time before had been enslaved. Yet it was a wrecked city. There was no real bomb damage. The Germans had been deadlier in their devastation. They had wrecked the lives of men, diseased their minds and bodies. It would take generations to repair the evil. Buildings could be replaced. The souls of men—never! Hitler had sneered: "I will not make martyrs out of peoples, I will corrupt them." France no longer had an army. Her manhood had been sent as slaves to work in Germany. Others languished in prisons. To live—women had sold their bodies. Children according to Nazi plan—became Hitler mothers. They were not asked. They were forced. Forty thousand babies who should have had proud French fathers were sired by gangsters. About us the cracked sidewalks, the rusty benches, the once well-kept lawns and trim flower-beds were overgrown with weeds. Many of the houses were pock-marked from bullets. That's how the Nazis enforced law and order!

The American Army consented to put us up at Hotel Wagram. Here A.T.C. passengers and the Embassy Staff ate and slept. Never had an army blanket been so welcome; never were we so grateful for the watchful care afforded us. Yet we shuddered. Not long before the Nazi overlords had



dined and wined here, had rested in these same beds. Now it was our turn. Every mouthful was from America. Breakfast, lunch, and supper came from cans. We ate with relish; at least we had deprived no hungry Frenchman of his own food. The waiters were all men who had lived underground, risked their lives for France. Glad of a job they served us hand and foot. They eyed every mouthful we took, which made us selfconscious. Later we learned why. They carefully scraped every dish. They carried home the food we Americans would have discarded as garbage. They had not eaten so royally since France had been occupied.

The prices in Paris were fantastic. The stores were empty. For a period of forty years all our clothes had been bought in Paris. We knew the shops. There were no reserves. On the bare shelves the Bon Marche and Gallerie LaFayette managed to display with artistic taste a few items. The simplest blouse cost \$40. For \$40.00 we bought a plane ticket from Paris to Zurich. Artificial flowers which had been manufactured in profusion sold at \$15.00 a bud. When we asked why, we were told, "We have no silk, no thread, no dye." We asked the sales-girls who wore chic dresses where they had come from. Some had blouses made of old curtains. Draperies made excellent skirts, even turbans. None of these people had a cake of soap or an ounce of tea; none of them had tasted coffee in years.

At Rue du Bac, where the Sisters of Charity have their Mother House, we saw hundreds of orphans, children who would never have another mother outside of the White Cornettes. One of the nuns showed us stacks of letters written by children pleading for a home, for shelter, for food, dying mothers asking that their children be cared for, sick women who had no one to nurse them and mind the babies. This was Paris. This was France. Many of the orphanages had been destroyed. There were 40,000 nuns, a veritable army of willing workers—but 20 of their institutions were wrecked and there was neither food nor money nor clothing!

Everyone is now wondering if Vishinsky's delay in turning up in London was not directly connected with Communistic maneuvers in France? The maneuver which forced de Gaulle to walk out? A weakened France leaves Russia that much freer to edge nearer to the Rhine. The Russians have said that by next summer they would be established on the Rhineland. Perhaps de Gaulle did well to get out of politics now. Perhaps he feels that as a retired general he can serve his country better. The next time he may be heading an army? England must realize by now that only a very close

Anglo-French block could give Britain the continental bolster she needs. Had de Gaulle been consistently supported by Britain and the U.S.A. instead of being picked up and thrown down alternatively, France might not have reached its present state. In some cases, de Gaulle picked rather inefficient ministers, yet he appointed them under pressure. This fact everyone conveniently forgets when another show-down comes. True de Gaulle has not been very successful at local government. Yet who would envy him his post. He and he alone has been able to rally a disunited France.

Another sad story is the antipathy for France that has broken out amongst the GI's. Their reports about appalling conditions, about defective internal administration, about graft and chaos seem to be throwing France on the radical side. So France is going Communistic? What have we done to aid the drastic situation?

No one who has not lived in France and knows France can fathom what she has endured, nor what she is going through. Where is our intuition? Where is our tact, our patience? People who have to satisfy craving hunger with a few shrivelled plums, or a handful of wilted dandelions bought on the black market are not going to be gay, normal, or cooperative. They are too frightened that we the conquerors might treat them as did the Nazis, who came as friends with false pretenses and lies. Americans can't realize that the Paris of yesterday is not the Paris of today. Even our closest friends have changed under a regime of fear and suppression. How can a people stricken by a deadly disease which may bring instant death be the same as in perfect health? Has anyone bothered to tell our GI's about the 56,000 people executed in Paris alone from 1940 to 1943? We have not on hand the later statistics. These men and women were hounded and hunted because they were Communists. The Nazis would eliminate the Communist. They shot down God-fearing, God-loving people. Of the 56,000 so-called Communists murdered by the Nazis only 1,500 did not ask for the last Rites. Thus 54,000 Parisians—some 97% so-called rabid Communists thought worthy of the death penalty died as Catholics and were buried by the Church.

Europeans have never understood Americans. We live differently. We think differently, we act differently in the New World. Yet this does not excuse us from using Christian charity. When we realize what the nuns and priests of France have sacrificed, have suffered, have endured, we feel France cannot be dead. America and England must come to her aid. Let us hope that this is a false alarm, that the hammer and sickle will not replace the tricolor.

# What is the Answer?

Theodore McDonald

IT has been truly stated that we are now moving swiftly either toward a greater Christianity or toward a total, materialistic paganism. We have heard much about this new paganism, for it is not something that came about in a year or even in ten years. Men do not just say: "Let us be pagans," or "Let us throw Christianity aside in favor of scientific positivism or rationalism or just plain atheism." This thing started many years ago when men began quite openly and maliciously to meddle with Doctrine and to curb the influence of the Church in men's lives. What was started by Luther, Rousseau, and Calvin was finished by men like Hume, Locke, Descartes, Voltaire, and Marx. It is a far cry from Luther to the pagan ideology of John Dewey and Dr. Kilpatrick, but the processes of erosion and of corrosion from Skepticism to "all out" paganism have been progressive. It has been inevitable because the Western world, its culture, its religion, and its laws were founded in Jesus Christ, and when a civilization and a culture ceases to be what it was; when it shuts itself off from the life blood of its inspiration, it becomes something else and usually a something that has no relation to the original.

You were amazed no doubt, during the war, to find when great questions came upon us that involved grave moral decisions, that the men who were on top of the heap doing the thinking and the deciding actually did not recognize that these were moral questions. They handled these grave problems in exactly the same manner as a black market operator regarded the moral aspect of his crimes. In other words, these men resorted to the slide-rule of expediency because they had forgotten all about a moral law. If modern man knows very little about God, and cares less, he is not going to be concerned about moral questions, because if you don't believe in God, you cannot believe in His moral law. I don't mean to say that most of these men and women are not good people; the pitiable part of the whole business is that they are usually earnest, sincere persons who have the very best intentions, but they lack foundations for the houses they wish to build. Let me startle you by saying that these men are actually conditioning the lives of Catholic people, because we too suffer as a result of their blind,

bungling efforts at restoring peace and happiness to a world without using the formula laid down by Christ.

We are aware of the fact that men are desperately seeking a common denominator or a magic touchstone that will suddenly restore the human race to sanity and will teach men to live in peace and love. We are also aware that they are trying valiantly, if foolishly, to restore equity and justice to the world by charter and protocol alone, as if elaborate scrolls of parchment with elegant diplomatic language and high-sounding phrases, alone, are going to teach men to respect and love their fellow man.

You can see that men have gotten so far away from God in a few generations that they no longer know anything about religion. They speak in abstract terms of moral issues, but they don't really mean morality as it stems from God's laws; in fact most of them really do not know what morality means because men have been talking in circles and in deliberately obscure language for so long that when a man actually defines morality in simple, Christian terms they look at him in amazement.

The very grave danger right now is that America may soon become a pagan land because men will know no differently. There is a danger that the Church and the pious citizen will become isolated from the world just as they did in Germany when the National socialist Party rose to power. We have a choice here that may work to our benefit or to our woe. We can feel that the world is so awry and so much in turmoil that we will live our own Catholic lives and mind our own spiritual business. The result will, of course, be that we will continue to live good lives, the Church will remain strong,—but only among Catholic people. We will then continue our process of inbreeding, of living in an isolated world where we will fall utterly in our duty to teach and to save men from the clutches of paganism.

Today we are making the fatal mistake of thinking that Catholic organization and Catholic activity is Catholic living. Catholic Action is not necessarily the kind of Catholic Activity we often find today; that is, activity that is merely concerned with the interests of devout Catholic men and women. This kind of activity, worthy though it may be, is

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not calculated to serve our urgent needs because we are doing absolutely nothing to reach and to influence the millions of good men and women who have lost the touchstone of Christianity. Perhaps we are a bit smug at times in our attitude toward our fellow man. We feel that our duty as Catholics is simply to live good lives and to let God and the clergy worry about the salvation of mankind. In this way we are failing woefully in one of the principal duties of a Christian which is to be a lay Apostle and to carry the word of God with us at all times, which means in our business and in our social relations. It is quite apparent that Catholic men and women are failing to carry Christ's admonition to the layman. It is apparent too, that we are failing to make of ourselves, cells of Catholic life that can renew the faith among men. Remember, that if we do not help to reclaim the souls of men for Christ and His Church, others may not be so apathetic. Surely we must know that those misguided people who have made a religion of Marxian Materialism are trying to win men to their brutal ideology by hiding its scabrous body with the garment of alluring promise. We must not only fight Communism by attacking it, but if we sincerely desire to remove the social abuses that have helped to give impetus to Marxian Socialism we must do something concrete—we must preach social justice and live according to the great Christian admonitions of the Encyclicals.

It is not merely effective for us to damn social injustice; it is imperative that we put the great spiritual teachings of Christ and His earthly representatives into effect. In other words, if we are Catholic employers it is our moral duty to act as Christian brothers toward those who work for us. May we repeat here that Catholic Action is not so much concerned with mere social and parliamentary proceedings, which take up so much of our time. Catholic action is not an exclusive movement, for it has as its primary purpose the renewal of the faith of Christ in the hearts of men and the restoration of the moral law and of Christian ethics to the lives of men. How are we going to accomplish this difficult task of reclaiming the minds and hearts of America from the domination of atheism, skepticism, and indifference? Perhaps you will say that the work of spiritual reclamation belongs primarily to the Hierarchy and the Clergy. This assertion, however, merely proves that like so many millions of Christians you are content to sleep the sleep of betrayal while the atheist is busy at the task of undermining

the moral foundations of Western Christianity. We must remember that while the clergy are our spiritual leaders and we look to the Bishops to guide us, that the actual work of Catholic Action must be done by the layman. It is the average Catholic layman and not the clergy that lives daily with those men and women who have forgotten about Christ. It is the Catholic layman who does business with these people, invites them to his house, goes to a play or a ball-game with them or spends two weeks with them in intimate social life in the summer, at the seashore or in the mountains. Can you imagine what could be done by earnest laymen and women of the Catholic faith if they possessed a little zeal? Is it not possible that they could change the lives of millions of indifferent persons, some of whom never were taught an iota of knowledge about Christ? You must realize that the Catholic religion started in just such a manner to conquer another pagan empire. Twelve men began the task of preaching and teaching the sublime doctrines of Jesus to hostile pagans. Most of them died the death of martyrs, but they passed the torch on to others who possessed the burning zeal to convert men whose pleasure-laden philosophy of caring only for their carnal desires was wholly opposed to Christ's teachings. Now most of these early disciples were laymen whose hearts were inflamed with Christian love and who wanted to spread the gospel of Christian charity to all men.

My friends, this is the answer. This is the only way in which we can hope to save America from paganism: by actually going among our friends and associates and bringing to them our knowledge of Christ, our fervor and devotion to Christian precepts and our desire that God's moral law must rule the minds and hearts of men and that the conduct of nations (which are composed of men) must be guided by a moral law which proclaims the inherent dignity of man and the adherence of all men to Christ as the source of all law. The truth is that in these days, when even Catholics often are affected by secular thought, that is by a wholly worldly or non-religious viewpoint, on questions that demand application of the moral law for a just solution, that much of our difficulty and a great part of our weakness is caused by the very people who could be and should be towers of strength in the crusade to restore this world to Christ.

We wish that some of our Catholic and other Christian brothers would make a trip to Union Square in New York City some evening and just listen for fifteen minutes to

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the Communists in their passionate defense and discussion of atheistic materialism. It would amaze one to behold with what fanatical zeal they defend their doctrines (for they have made a religion of materialism and the State is their God) and how they tirelessly try to make converts of the curious passersby.

Of course, we know that they preach a gospel of hatred for their enemies, for any movement that does not have God as its centre will end in class hatred, even though it claims to be the champion of the working man, of the lowly and the downtrodden.

Is it not about time that we shook the sleep from our eyes, that we arose from our profound lethargy and stirred ourselves from our sinful indifference? Is it not about time that we went forth to preach the Sermon on the Mount and the message of Christian love? Is it not about time that we started to put the great social Encyclicals into effect instead of lecturing about them to polite, academic audiences? If we do not fight for the rights of the laboring man, some one else will and even though their methods be ruthless and their philosophy be laden with hate and with the urge to ceaseless class warfare they will win many to their cause because they hold up tempting material promises to trap the souls of men.

There is no doubt that the world is undergoing a tremendous change. We cannot expect that such a mighty cataclysm as this terrible second World War would not sear the souls of men and give impetus to a mighty social, spiritual and economic upheaval. Peoples that have been held in economic slavery are now being liberated while the peoples of other nations that have enjoyed freedom are now being enslaved. The course and shape that the Western Christian nations will assume is now being indicated, for the struggle is between two forces that are fighting without quarter on that battlefield which is the soul of man.

The Catholic Church which almost alone looms large, as the one solid impediment in the progress of ruthless materialism toward the absolute state, is staying the brutal hands of the pagan who seeks to feed mankind, body and soul, into the maw of the new Moloch, the State.

You must see that in this death struggle you and I cannot afford to be idle spectators. We cannot allow any form of political expediency or timidity to hold us back from joining in the struggle to restore men to Christ. We are not only members of the One True, Holy, and Apostolic Church but we are also soldiers of the Church Militant.

When we were confirmed, the Bishop gave us a slight blow on the cheek to remind us that we must be true soldiers of Jesus Christ and that we must be prepared to suffer even death for the faith of Christ.

It is not necessary to remind us that the future of America is at stake, and that what that future will be is dependent upon what we, the soldiers of the army of Christ, are going to do. You will remember that when the pagan Soviets struck against Christian Spain in 1936 it was part of a master plan to burn Europe from end to end. Lenin himself declared that this Satanic strategy was indicated. Today only Spain stands in the way, and if she fails partly through our cowardly reticence and the ignominious conduct of many of our Catholic politicians, there will not be a Christian nation left in Europe. We Catholic laymen who know the history and the story of Russia's attempt to destroy the Catholic Church in Spain have acted shamefully by our silence about Spain. If we maintain that ignoble conspiracy of silence we will pay for our sin in a precious coin, for the men who are inspired by a hatred of Christ and His ministers would not hesitate to set the flaming torch to American Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, just as they did in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, and in other Spanish cities and towns. There is so much effective work that could be done by the Catholic layman and so little actually done by the precious few who are doing the work that all of us should be performing.

Last summer a priest in St. John, N.B., Canada asked me a question that I cannot answer. "Will you tell me," he asked, "what is the matter with us?" We are 24 million in the United States; we boast great Universities, Colleges, and Secondary schools where young men and women receive splendid, well-planned educations. Every year an army of these young people armed with classical, scientific and religious educations fare forth to take their places in the world. Yet we find that Catholic Action is only a trickle from the Rock of faith, where a mighty Niagara should pour forth. Why? Who is to blame? Have we been so stifled by the dank air of secular thought that we have lost our desire to be true soldiers in Christ's Army? In the various dioceses how few men do we find who will equip themselves to go out on the public platform and speak "of the things that are Christ's"?

Oh! we have plenty of societies, and many empty speeches and suggestions from the "floor," but when it comes to the acid test, how few of these men and women really volunteer to speak, to instruct, to form

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small cells of Catholic life that are the penicillin to slay the microbes of paganism, of secularism, and of sheer indifference?

The children that you are now rearing so carefully will have to live in this world of 1965. Will it make any difference to you now to feel that in another generation your children may have to fight to practice their religion (and we include the various denominations of the Christian faith)?

It requires no great feat of the imagination to see that if these haters of Christ's very name, that if these gross materialists crush Christianity, that your Churches, both Protestant and Catholic, will be destroyed and you will not be able to practice your faith, except in secret. It has happened in Europe and it can happen right here! The brutal hand that is holding a torch to ignite Christian Churches is directed by men who have sworn to blot our religion from the hearts and minds of men. It is true that we must try to convert those who now hate Christ's name and correct those social abuses that have been the cause of the growth of the cancer of Atheism. It is also true that we must take a firm stand as Christian men and women against the spread of Communism in America.

Unfortunately, too many Catholic men place political considerations above their religion and are afraid to cry out against the enemies of their God because it may hurt them politically. They are silent and cowardly when they should be articulate and fervent in defense of their faith, but it is a silence for which they will one day be held accountable. Pontius Pilate was not the only man who washed his hands in moral cowardice and shame when he should have spoken out and seen that Justice was done to the tall Galilean. It is evident that all men cannot speak in public or write, but that is no excuse for not joining in the work of a genuine Lay Apostolate. Your zeal can inspire other men and women and the good work you can perform in your social and business contacts would be of enormous aid in spreading the word of God.

The Church recently lost a noble son whose life was an object lesson in true Catholic Action; a man who placed his faith high above all other considerations and gave Catholic laymen a lofty goal at which to aim. Thomas F. Woodlock, Catholic scholar and writer, was not merely content to live as a splendid Christian, for he carried his noble spiritual and moral philosophy of life right into the scene of his daily toil. He did not merely write of finance and economics in "The Wall Street Journal" and then

reserve his moral convictions for his circle of friends. Thomas Woodlock embellished the science of finance with the sound moral doctrines of Christian belief. He wove the beautiful threads of golden Christian ethics into the tapestry of men's daily lives and they loved him for it. Men of character will always respect and admire that man who will stand aside from his more timid friends and fight for those deep, moral principles that are the cornerstone of Christian ethics. When Thomas F. Woodlock died there were as many devoted non-Catholic friends at his Requiem as there were Catholic.

We cite this exemplary Christian man to remind you that a little zeal will leaven the whole mass.

We also wish to point out that this is the duty of every Christian man and woman. You must see that your Christian way of life is in peril and that if you do nothing to restore Christ's love to the hearts of men, you are guilty of grave negligence.

We are living in an age that is desperately irreligious. We know that today countless men and women and even children, on Sunday morning go to Motion picture "temples" where once they instinctively went to Church and prayed to God.

We do not think that any one motion picture has done grave harm to young people, but it is the steady drip, drip, drip of a propaganda that not only ignores Christianity but sneers at its most sacred ideals that has done the harm. We must not fear the bigot (who merely possesses a background of mis-information or of ignorance) half as much as we should fear those who ignore religion entirely.

Catholic men and women, you have a serious task confronting you today. You are soldiers of the Church militant and you have been called into action. You have been drilled and instructed in your youth, and the Church is now calling upon you to fill up the ranks and fight for your Captain, Jesus Christ. Men and women of the great Lay Apostolate, this is a draft and we want no slackers, for even the weak of body can join in this struggle.

Catholic men and women, we are the spiritual heirs of the "Twelve" and of the thousands who yielded their sweet lives that the lily of Christianity might grow in a Pagan desert.

These glorious Sons of Christ died that the pagan might learn the story of Christian Charity. We are their heirs, are now called upon to beat back the pagan and his cruel, bitter, and brutal creed of materialism.

Where are you in this struggle?

# ACTION

# THE CHILDREN OF FATIMA

MARY FABYAN WINDEATT

Illustrated by Gedge Harmon



**A** FEW weeks after the great miracle, the three little shepherds began to attend school. As Lucia had foreseen, both students and teachers were consumed with curiosity, and not a day passed that she and her cousins did not have real sacrifices to offer for souls because of the many idle questions put to them.

"Why do the other children stare at us so?" asked Jacinta one day. "It's as though they thought something were wrong with us."

"Yes, and they get together and whisper things about the lady," added Francisco sadly, "things that aren't true. I've heard them. Oh, Lucia! I don't like school at all. Why do we have to go?"

The latter tried to hide her true feelings. "We have to go to school so that our parents won't have visitors in the house all day asking for us. And so you two can prepare for your First Communion."

At this some of the sadness vanished from Jacinta's face. "That's right," she admitted. "We're learning the Catechism at school. And if we hurry up and finish the book, maybe they'll let us make our First Communion before we're ten years old."

Pondering this possibility, Francisco also was comforted. "I never thought of that," he said. "Oh, how wonderful that would be!"

"There's another thing," put in Lucia quickly.

"Now that we come to the village every day for school, we have a chance to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament. We couldn't do that when we were taking care of the sheep."

The brother and sister looked at each other solemnly. How truly Lucia spoke! Why, before they had started coming to school, their only trips to the village church had been on Sundays and feast days to attend Mass. Now, despite the various people waiting at the church to see and speak with them, there was time to make one or more visits to the Blessed Sacrament every day!

"We mustn't complain about school any more," decided Jacinta finally. "Of course it's hard to be stared at and whispered about, but then the lady did ask if we'd be willing to help souls by suffering for them and we said we would."

"And she promised that God would help us to bear the suffering," added Lucia. "I often think of that when things get hard."

Francisco nodded. "That's why it's so nice to be able to go to church often," he said slowly. "Somehow, before the Tabernacle it seems much easier to ask God for His help."

So the months passed, and life for the children rolled on in orderly fashion. By the fall of 1918; the two girls had made excellent progress in their

studies. But it was a different story with Francisco, for he had never been able to grow interested in school work. Realizing this, his teachers occasionally allowed him to stay away from class for a day or so, believing that a short rest would help him. But although the boy was pleased to have such free time, he knew that his teachers were mistaken. He would never achieve a real interest in reading or writing or arithmetic. After all, why should he? Hadn't the lady promised that very soon she would come and take him to heaven?

"Call for me at the church when school is over," he told Lucia and Jacinta on the occasions of his various holidays. "I'm going to say many Rosaries today."

The two girls were not at all surprised at these words, although eighteen months ago they would have been dumbfounded. For previous to the lady's first visit to the Cova, Francisco had been little interested in spiritual matters. Like many men and boys, he had believed that visits to the Blessed Sacrament, frequent reception of the Sacraments, the daily recitation of the Rosary, were meant only for women and girls. But what a difference since the Blessed Virgin had shown herself to him six times! Now he realized that each man and boy in the world, even as each woman and girl, has but one reason for existence: to know, love and serve God in this world by prayer and good works, then to be happy with Him forever in the next.

Yes, Francisco had learned a great deal since the lady's first visit in the Cova on May 13, 1917. Often he reminded himself of what she had said then; that soon she would take Jacinta and him to heaven, leaving Lucia on earth for an indefinite period.

"But she also said that I must say many Rosaries before she takes me to heaven, and say them properly," he thought. "Oh, I must get busy!"

So not a day passed that Francisco did not offer at least one-third of the Rosary—or five decades—to the Queen of Heaven. And for him, saying the Rosary was no longer a tiresome matter of repeating so many times the Our Father, Hail Mary and Gloria. No, now it was like looking at five, ten or fifteen beautiful pictures of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin.

"The different pictures are the different mysteries of the Rosary," he told himself. "Oh, until the lady came, I never knew anything about them!"

So, even as Lucia and Jacinta, Francisco now recited the Rosary "properly" every day—that is, he chose a set of five pictures or events from the life of Our Lord or the life of the Blessed Virgin,

either the Joyful, Sorrowful or Glorious mysteries, and looked upon each separately with the eyes of his soul. He did this while reciting the five decades of the Rosary. In other words, he *meditated*!

The practice was not too hard—even for a boy of ten years, such as Francisco, or a little girl of eight, such as Jacinta. Indeed, the three children rapidly became experts at calling to mind one or all fifteen of the mysteries of the Rosary. Thus, when offering the Joyful Mysteries, they knew that there were five pictures—or events in the life of Our Lord and the life of the Blessed Virgin—to look at. First, the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel came to the Blessed Virgin and told her that she was to be the Mother of God. Second, the Visitation, when the Blessed Virgin set out to visit her aged cousin Elizabeth. Third, the Nativity, or the Birth of Our Lord in Bethlehem. Fourth, the Presentation, when the Christ Child was brought to the Temple forty days after His birth and offered to God. Fifth, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple by the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph.

It was the same when offering the Sorrowful Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries. Once more there were groups of five pictures to consider—with sad scenes, happy scenes. Oh, truly, saying the Rosary properly was a splendid way to pray! Thus anyone, even small children, could win graces for souls who otherwise would go to hell because of their sins. And thus anyone could help put a stop to the war and bring lasting peace to the world. The heavenly lady—who was no other than the Mother of God—had said so!

The days passed, and more and more people became interested in saying the Rosary properly because of the wonderful events which had taken place at Fatima. Plans were even made to erect a little chapel in the Cova, since the lady had asked that this be done. But in the late fall of 1918, a terrible plague began sweeping over Europe which caused such plans to be suspended. Germany, France, Spain, Portugal—the dreaded influenza germ was striking everywhere. Overnight strong men fell victim to it, and in village and city the funeral bells tolled in constant requiem. Finally the awful malady reached Fatima, and among the first victims were the Marto and dos Santos families. Of these, Jacinta and Francisco were the most seriously afflicted.

The latter fell ill around Christmas time, and remained in a critical state for about two weeks. Then he began to improve. But when friends and family rejoiced at this, the little boy only shook his head weakly.

"I'm never going to be well again. I'm going to die."

"Nonsense!" cried his godmother. "I've made a promise to the Blessed Virgin, Francisco. If she cures you, I'm going to sell a quantity of my best wheat weighing as much as you do, and give the money toward building a chapel in her honor in the Cova."

Again the little boy shook his head. "You won't have to keep that promise, godmother. I know it."

The entire Marto family were perplexed and fearful because of Francisco's words. But Jacinta, recovering from the dread influenza in another room, felt that she understood what her brother meant. After all, the lady had said that she would take him to heaven soon. Well, perhaps "soon" had arrived! And so, when not saying the Rosary, the little girl frequently speculated as to what had happened and was going to happen to her beloved brother.

"Maybe the lady came and told him when she's going to take him to heaven," she thought. "Maybe she said when she was going to take me, too. Oh, how I wish I knew!"

But the lady had not appeared to Francisco yet. Then a few days later she did come. The unexpected apparition took place in the home of the two invalids, at a time when no one was about. Yes, it was God's Will that the Lady of the Rosary, radiant and lovely as on her previous visits, should make herself visible to her young friends for still another time. And as they

looked upon her, garbed in her customary white and gold, the hearts of the little shepherds filled once more with unearthly joy. How beautiful the Blessed Virgin was! How kind and motherly! Why, one could spend an eternity looking at her and never grow tired....

*Had Our Lady come to take them to heaven? Would they both die at once? Oh, surely so, for it would be very easy to give themselves into her keeping and go to see the saints...the angels... GOD! At least Francisco's death could not be very far away...he had been sick for so many weeks...Jacinta, too—she had suffered a great deal....*

Reading the children's jumbled thoughts like an open book, the lady smiled. "Not yet, Francisco," she said gently, "although in a very little while I shall come and take you to heaven as I promised.

And as for you, Jacinta—are you willing to keep on suffering and convert still more sinners?"

The little girl had ardently longed to go to heaven with Francisco, but at the sound of the lady's voice she was filled with wisdom beyond her years. In all things, it is best to have no will but the Will of God, to desire nothing but what will please Him most and help souls to merit His choicest gifts. Now, strengthened with this wonderful grace, she clasped her hands eagerly and looked up at the lady.

"I'll keep on suffering as long as God wishes! I'll save as many souls as I can!"

The lady smiled understandingly. "Then you will



Lucia and Jacinta marvelled at the new radiance upon his face.



suffer much. You will even go to a hospital. But you will bear everything for the conversion of sinners, in reparation for offenses against the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and for the love of Jesus."

As she spoke these prophetic words, the heavenly one looked kindly at both children, then slowly faded from sight. Her latest visit to Fatima was over!

Naturally the brother and sister could hardly wait to share their wonderful news with Lucia. Francisco was going to die very soon, but Jacinta—convalescing from the influenza and able to walk about—was going to remain on earth somewhat longer. She was going to suffer still more for souls.

"I was right all along," Francisco confided when the opportunity came and Lucia, returning one afternoon from school, was permitted to visit briefly with Jacinta and himself. "I'm not going to get better, even if godmother did promise the Blessed Virgin that she would sell some of her best wheat and give the money toward building a chapel in the Cova."

Lucia's eyes were uneasy. "I guess the lady thinks you've said enough Rosaries," she observed, her heart torn for still another time as she looked on Francisco's wasted body and realized that the prophecy made so long ago in the sheep pasture was about to be fulfilled. "And I guess she thinks you've suffered enough, too."

"Yes. But there's one thing that troubles me." "What?"

"I haven't made my First Communion like other children, at the church. Oh, Lucia! I never finished the Catechism at school. And now maybe they won't let me receive Our Lord..."

There was real longing in the boy's voice. But he offered his fear that he might die without having received Holy Communion as a sacrifice, and said no more about it.

Now Easter was approaching, and the parish priest was eager that as many as possible of his people should approach the Sacraments for the great feast. He thought of little Francisco Marto, hesitating because the child had not finished the Catechism. Well, he was a good boy. Even if he had not finished the Catechism, surely he knew enough to understand what was meant by the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist? Surely he could make his Easter duty like others in the parish and thus share more fully in the numerous blessings of the holy season?

"I'll go and hear the lad's confession," the good priest decided. "And I'll bring him Holy Communion, too."

How happy Francisco was when he learned that his two great desires were about to be fulfilled! "You'll have to help me to examine my conscience,"

he told Lucia. "I want to have my soul really clean when Our Lord comes into it."

So the little girl did her best to aid her cousin in calling to mind his sins. For instance, in the past he had frequently disobeyed his mother. Did he remember all the times he had run out of the house when she had told him to stay inside? And all the times when he had pretended not to hear her calling him?

Francisco nodded sorrowfully. "I remember. But what else have I done?"

Lucia shook her head. "I can't think of anything else. But maybe Jacinta can. After all, she lives with you."

His sister could think of no other sins. "Just tell the priest when he comes that you're sorry for these things and anything else you did that may have offended Our Lord. That's all that's necessary for a good Confession."

So on April 2, a few days before Easter, Francisco received the Sacrament of Penance, and early the next morning the pastor brought him Holy Communion. Later in the day, when Lucia and Jacinta crept into his room, they marveled at the new radiance upon his face.

"Francisco, aren't you suffering any more?"

"No, the pain has gone."

"Do you suppose the lady is coming today to take you to heaven?"

"I don't know. Nothing matters, now that I've been to Holy Communion."

Jacinta clasped her hands fervently. "Oh, it must be wonderful to receive Our Lord!"

Lucia knelt down by the bed. "Francisco, you will pray for us up in heaven?"

"Of course I'll pray! I'll ask Our Lord to let you and Jacinta come there real soon. But you... you'll have to offer the Rosary for me today. I'm so tired..."

The two girls promised to do this, then slowly took their leave. Would they ever speak with Francisco again? Would he live through this day—April 3? Surely not. But even as they shut the door to the sick room and stood looking at each other gravely in the hall outside, the bell in the distant church tower began to toll—slowly, solemnly.

Quickly Jacinta looked up, made the Sign of the Cross, then joined her hands in prayer. "The influenza—someone else has died of it!" she whispered. "Oh, Lucia! The next time the bells toll like this..."

The latter nodded, her face pale and tense with grief. The next time the bells tolled like this it would mean that a little boy had gone to heaven.

*(To be continued.)*





## How Mrs. McGrew won the Game

David A. Driscoll



**S**ATTIDEE mornin'. James Aloysius McGrew, scion of the McGrew clan, almost opened one eye as a ray of sun-light shot athwart his chubby features. Sattidee mornin', he sensed drowsily as he oozed back into slumberland. He was not yet sufficiently awake to gauge the importance of that Saturday morning. For it was the day of

the big game that was to determine whether St. Patrick's was to retain the Parochial School "Championship" or release it to the despised St. Dominic's

Up from the kitchen seeped the delicious odors of coffee and frying bacon: to which was shortly added the reek of McGrew Senior's pipe permeating the bedroom of his son. Still he slumbered. Even the slam of the screen door by his departing sire, on his way to keep McGrew, Inc., out of the red by dint of rugged application of the hammer, trowel, and spirit level, left Jamesy sleeping. With

Himself out of the way for the day the next order of business for the patient mother of five was to get his namesake in the way of some unremunerative labor.

"Jamesy"—the patient voice sounded; no answer. "James-ee!" in slightly elevated, sharper tone; silence. "James Aloysius McGrew" with a drill sergeant's shrillness that penetrated even the sleeping lad's consciousness. "If I have t'speak t'ye again it ain't talkin' t'ye I'll be!" A sleepy response and then a sudden recalling of the importance of the day. He slipped quickly out of bed to drop to his knees for the morning Our Father and Hail Mary. Even in the attitude of prayer, with a city fireman's economy of effort he slipped out of his bed garments and wriggled into the day's toiling ones. There was a final signing of the Cross and with Houdini swiftness he finished his toilet even as he patterned down stairs to the kitchen, basking in the early sunlight and the murky smoke wreaths left by Himself.

A hasty lick and promise at the kitchen sink, a sniff of the breakfast and he dropped into his chair, where, with bowed head, he meekly said his Grace. Then he poured the fragrant coffee into a saucer, out of which, while he munched his bread and bacon, he syphoned it with a suction and dexterity that was a plain infringement on the Hoover process. A swab of the end of the checkered table cloth across his generous mouth completed the ritual and he turned in his chair to learn what fate had in store for the leading batter in the League (Av. 335); she was standing with one hand on her hip and the other caressing her chin as she pondered the Order of the Day.

"Lemme see, deary," she began in the honeyed accents that bitter experience had taught him merely preluded the infliction of some ghastly task taking up the precious time that might more fittingly be spent at the ole swimmin' hole. "I was just tryin' t'think, lover, what it was Himself wanted done most." Her offspring eyed her with what was "more a wish than a hope." "Oh, yes, he said you was t'whitewash th' chicken coop, first; then ye c'n break up th' boxes grocer Dugan brought f'r kindlin'; then ye c'n spade up th' end of th' yard f'r th' Victory Garden." Victory Garden! Calamity Garden! "An' then ye c'n beat th' front room rugs—" but his crushed spirit rebelled and not waiting for further torture he tore from the room with a sarcastic "Yessum." He took a savage joy in ejecting the rooster and his harem from the offensive chicken coop.

The various jobs were finished at last to the accompaniment of the impatient cat calls of mem-

bers of St. Patrick's squad hanging over the front fence beseeching his presence on the ball lot for practice. First, he made his report to the Officer of the Day with a hopeful light in the Irish blue eyes.

"An' now deary," resumed that official where she had left off, depositing the latest McGrew pride in its perambulator, whence it bestowed a toothless grin on the victim ready for the sacrifice, "ye c'n take Patsy f'r a ride. He was that bad all night with his tooth (not in evidence, by the way) that I didn't get a wink of sleep with th' precious—did I sweetums?" with a rapturous kiss and hug. "So ye c'n just ride 'im around 'til he drops off." Alas for the hopes of the leading batter of the League! Too well he knew that when Patrick Joseph was taken for a ride it meant hours admiring the scenery ere slumber's chains could bind him. What did this flinty hearted mother care for the crucial event in baseball circles? What meant a baseball championship to her callous heart? What—but there, there—mothers possess so many other sterling virtues that we will draw a veil of charity over her ghastly indifference.

As Jamesy pushed his precious burden through the open gate into the reception committee he preserved the tactful silence of a man sitting in the rear of the machine his wife is driving. Stunned silence greeted the hideous news. With the leading batter out of the game—well, the hated St. Dominic's would be handed the championship on a silver platter. But it had taken brains to win the championship. After the shock wore off, Captain Tippy Henderson snapped his fingers.

"I got it!" in the tone employed by the scientist when he fled from the bath crying Eureka! "C'mon fellers, leave it t'me!" Without more ado they followed in hopeful silence, Patsy and all, to the ball grounds. Here master Henderson looked the field over; then he thrust two (dirty) fingers into his capacious mouth and emitted a shrill blast.

Evidently it was a message in code, for a shock-headed, freckle-faced youth looked over and made a gesture to indicate "Me?" as he pointed to his breast. A "come hither" gesture made by sweeping the arm over the head served notice that the signaled one was honored with a royal command to appear before royalty. He slouched sulkily across the field, prepared to learn the worst. Nor was he kept long in doubt. Captain Tippy, his eldest brother, placed an arm in an ingratiating manner about the victim's shoulders and in silken tones (that didn't fool the recipient an iota) broke the evil tidings.

"Lissen Muggsy, lissen" in accents that fairly dripped, "we got t'win th' game t'day, youse knows that. But Jamesy has t'keep care of his kid brother"—indicating the McGrew latest pledge to society as if he were carrion. "So, like th' good, loyal little rooter you are, I'm askin' youse t'keep care of it durin' th' game—" at which juncture the insulted one gave vent to a whoop of mingled distress and negation.

"Who me— who me?"—and choked in futile rage and scorn, bluntly rejecting the tempting honor. And he conferred a glare on the cherubic features of the pride of the McGrews that almost sent the angel into spasms. "Me?" he screamed; "nothin' doin', Adolph, nothin' doin'" and glared again but by this, a kid, tiring of a candy bar, conferred it on the cause of the rumpus who forgot the insult and started grinding his gums on it.

"Aw c'm on an' be a good sport" in tones that were losing their silky notes and turning to gross-grain.

"Be yerself, big boy, f'rgit it, f'rgit it!" at which Tippy, seeing that reason was getting nowhere, revealed his real brutal nature. He leaned toward his victim and transfixing him with the glare said to be used by snakes in hypnotizing their feathered prey, fairly hissed.

"F'rgit it hey?" he rasped. "An' whilst I'm f'rgittin' that, mebbe I'd otta f'rgit who it was swiped mother's nickel fr'm under th' kitchen clock an' spent it f'r pop." It was blackmail, sheer blackmail. From lips that had just dripped saccharine. Totalitarianism at its worst. "SO" with a sarcastic rub in, "be mother's little helper an' ride Patsy around 'til 'e falls asleep," adding magnanimously, "youse kin watch th' game too." The protocol delivered, the players scattered over the field for the long delayed practice. The involuntary WAAC silently drooped over the outrage. Suddenly, from one of the lads too young to enjoy the game long, came an ecstatic cry.

"Hey fellers, a han'dorgan, a han'dorgan—an' a monkey!" Pushing Patsy, now soporific from his candy debauch, the entourage sailed away for the next corner whence issued the poignant notes of "Ah, I have Sighed to Rest Me" and "Celeste Aida" rendered by a bored musician of a swarthy complexion and handlebar mustache who languidly ground out the classics with one hand while with the other he payed out and reeled in a gorgeously attired and excessively polite Simian, representing the fiscal end of the symphonic arrangement. Up one street and down another swept the enraptured audience.

Finally, the impressario, together with his busi-

ness agent and the Diamond Horseshoe entered a corner saloon; here, the thirsty conductor tossed a scuttle of amber fluid down his arid throat, kindly permitting the monkey to (in defiance of Emily Post) swab the dregs with his tongue, a proceeding so enraging the proprietor that with bitter words he heaved the opera troupe and personnel out a side door. Thus it was that Muggsy forgot his sacred, if undesired trust. So it was that a few moments later a neighbor of the McGrews saw, with horrified eyes Master Patrick, long since lulled to sleep by the languorous strains and the candy, into slumber land, his angelic features smeared and embossed with a horde of flies—giving them the appearance of a slice of currant cake.

It needed but one glance for the stricken mother to comprehend the outrage that had been perpetrated on the house of McGrew. Long practice with the derelictions of Jamesy made the diagnosis easy; the fertile Irish brain made the prognosis; the howls from the ball field located the clinic; the operating instrument a loose picket wrenched from the fence. Safely securing her jewel under a sheet of mosquito netting, the commando raid was on. She arrived at the scene of conflict at a time known (for lack of a better word by sports writers from time immemorial) as the crucial moment. The first object her keen eyes lit on was a rear perspective of the recreant James A., his body bent at right angles over the home plate, viciously swinging his .335 bat and imploring the pitcher to "put 'er over!" It was a *mise en scene* made to order.

Up to the seventh inning the game had been in the bag for the gladiators fighting under the gonfalon of the Apostle of Ireland; but, due to a combination of hits, passes, and errors, the battling St. Dominic's had tied the score; In the eighth it forged ahead three runs. Now it was the last half of the ninth; three St. Patrick's men were on, two out and (need it be told?) the doughty .335 hitter was up. Even as the avenging parent slipped to a point promising contact with the erring one, the ball lobbed across the plate. He swung lustily; up and away soared the horse hide. "Swat!" and up and away hoisted the avenging picket giving the astounded batter an unlooked for impetus. With

a howl of agony he careered down the first base line.

Never was an athlete better paced for, with each agonized leap, with cries of "take that" "an' that" each pronoun was punctuated with a caress of the well aimed picket. Around first he roared, St. Dominic's howling protests and St. Patrick's yelling encouragement to hunter and quarry. The hit meant three runs sure—with the flat footed James accelerating his pace sufficiently, the game. Cascading for second, the impetus for the needed run was being furnished by a doting, if just parent. Alas, for the sex—she switched to foul strategy. Tiring rapidly, she sensed that he would touch every base; by ignoring the basic principles of sport, she put into practice the theorem of Euclid that, "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points." So, instead of following him, she cut the base. Is any comment necessary? Words fail.

A true sportsman, James fairly whistled around second, picking 'em up and laying 'em down—briskly. An anguished glance out of the corner of his left eye revealed the hollow treachery of the being he loved and trusted most on earth. A lightning like calculation proved that his speed plus her tangent would surely bisect the plane of his orbit. Correct. To which may be noted that the fence picket, clutched in the same hand that rocked the cradle and soothed the fevered brow, nearly bisected the Galloping Gael.

Entirely unneeded, it was the final impetus that sent him with even greater speed to third, which he rounded with his plump legs moving like piston strokes, plunged for home and slid over the plate 1/1000th of a second before the ball smacked into the glove of the anguished catcher. Without waiting for a blue print of the affair, he came to his feet and wheeled for another home base. He was followed by his exhausted parents, who, not being built on the lines of Greg Rice, decided to call it a day. She panted her way homeward, neither understanding nor caring that the piteous grief of St. Dominic's mingled with the delirium of St. Patrick's, proved that Mrs. McGrew had won the game.



# Our Lady of The Sacred Heart

By a Missionary Sister of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

"MIRACLE In Mexico," an article in the June (1945) issue of the "Catholic Digest," aroused much interest among all true lovers of Mary. It is Mexico City that Heaven has chosen for the renewal of the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. After a history of nearly a hundred years it suddenly flares up with new life. Thousands of small golden and silver figures, offered to Our Lady in grateful acknowledgment of miracles wrought by her Divine Son, are displayed on the walls of San Jose in Mexico City. These give evidence that the Blessed Virgin Mary is surely pleased with the revival of this lovely devotion.

To many readers the title OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART is new, though it has a history of almost one hundred years. This title is the result of a promise made by Father Chevalier, an ardent lover of the Sacred Heart and His Blessed Mother. Insurmountable difficulties seemed to frustrate his plans for a Society of Missionaries. He had recourse to Mary, promising to honor her in a special way should she send him immediate and obvious help. Mary did not fail him, nor did Father Chevalier fail to redeem his promise. He was thinking of a title that would express all the relations existing between Mary and the Sacred Heart. With and through Mary he wished to glorify and love the Sacred Heart, and with and through the Sacred Heart he desired to love and pay due homage to Mary. After much prayer and meditation he found the happy expression: OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART. This title and devotion seemed to him a natural fruit, a true consequence and supplement of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. For, if devotion to the Sacred Heart is to be true and genuine, there must also be found a place for Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Mary was and remains always closely linked to the various mysteries of the Word Incarnate: e.g., Christ, Redeemer—Mary, Co-Redemptrix; Ecce Homo—Mater Dolorosa; Christ, the meritorious cause of all graces—Mary, the Mediatrix of all graces. Does it, then, not sound natural when we call Mary Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, seeing her in all her relations to this Divine Heart?

Yes, Mary is the Lady of the Sacred Heart because she was loved by the Divine Heart; chosen from all eternity to become His mother; prepared by Him as a master-piece of supernatural beauty and immaculate holiness; full of grace. Mary consented to become the mother of Jesus, thus participating in the great act of divine charity, the Incarnation, giving Jesus, together with His human body, also the heart of flesh, the symbol of His love. Mary is loved by

the human heart of Jesus with a tender and affectionate love. She was pleasing to Him in the highest degree, and He bestowed on her His choicest blessings and favors. Day by day she grew in the knowledge and love of her Jesus and in the imitation of His virtues. His interests were, and are still, her interests. Mary had a share in the greatest love of Jesus on Calvary, became the co-redemptrix of the human race and was appointed the mother of the redeemed. She is omnipotent in her appeals to the Sacred Heart. She obtains everything she asks for. She is the Mediatrix of all graces, the treasurer of the inexhaustible riches of the Sacred Heart. Mary leads souls to the Sacred Heart, as we see clearly in the life of St. Margaret Mary.

How appropriate, then, when Father Chevalier asked and was permitted to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart on May 31, which is, so to say, the pivot around which the May devotion to Mary and the June devotion to the Sacred Heart revolve. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and all the clients of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart are anticipating the day when the Church will give the final approval to this devotion by extending the feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart to the universal Church.

When the title and the devotion to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart had been approved by the Holy See, Father Chevalier designed a statue and a picture to express the meaning of the title. [This picture is used on the cover of this issue of "The Grail."] It shows the Blessed Mother holding the Infant Jesus on her arm. With one hand she touches His Heart indicating the close relations existing between them and also the great power and influence she has with the Sacred Heart. The Infant points to His mother as if to say, "Go to my mother with all your troubles. Look at her benevolent smile. She will help you. See, I have given her great power over my Heart. She holds the key to the treasures of my Heart; she may dispose of them for you."

Mary has made use of the power voluntarily and lovingly given her by her Divine Son. From the first public manifestation of this power at the Wedding Feast at Cana until the recent extraordinary favors granted at the shrine of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at San Jose in Mexico City, millions of devout clients of Mary sing her praises in gratitude for favors received: difficult conversions, recovery from illnesses that baffled medical skill, success in hopeless enterprises. It seems that Our Lady of the Sacred Heart finds singular pleasure in making her goodness and power shine forth in difficult and desperate



cases. The energetic expression of St. Ephrem which styles Our Lady the "Hope of the hopeless" is found by common accord to apply with special appropriateness to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

And this is precisely what makes us hope that she will take in hand also the cause of Religion and the Church which in our days has come to a stormy pass. If only the world would turn to Mary and implore the help of her who is "mighty as an army in battle array." Much depends on us. Let us ask her to conquer the world for the Sacred Heart and establish His reign over all nations.

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Colored pictures of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with the beautiful Memorare to her can be obtained for the asking; novena booklets at 10 cents each from: Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bernharts (Reading) Pa.

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# A Chivalrous Knight of Babylon

Bartholomew Fuerst, O.S.B.

**B**ABYLON! This name limns upon our minds the picture of a powerful, mysterious, and ancient city of the East. A city of romance, commerce, art, the throng of two million people surging through the streets, vice and sin, the rich and the poor. Such are the mental images flashed across the screen of our imagination. This is Babylon six hundred years before the world was to hear of Christ.

It was to this city that the plan of God was directing the nation of the Jews; from the peaceful and green banks of the river Jordan to the noisy, pagan city of Babylon. At this epoch of the history of mankind the Babylonians were the ruling power of the East. Their colorful general,

Nabuchodonosor II, had just besieged and reduced Jerusalem to a heap of stones. The inhabitants of the conquered country were herded together and driven over the desert terrain to the foreign country of Babylon.

During the sorrowful years of this long exile one of these Jewish exiles had, by the providence of God, come to hold a position of authority. By skillful business acumen he had acquired much wealth. This Jew was known by the name of Joachim. During these years spent among the pagans he served God faithfully and prospered. His fellow Jews realized that Joachim was honest and one who feared God. These compatriots held him in great respect. Thus his less fortunate

brethren were accustomed to resort to Joachim for advice and to settle disputes which had arisen in the Jewish ghetto.

Joachim lived on a beautiful estate just outside the din of the city. There with his wife Susanna he enjoyed the peace and rest of the country. Quite different from most of the hard pressed exiles, Joachim's life was one of comfort and leisure. His mornings were spent settling disputes and giving advice to those who sought. Such affairs were concluded before noon, for by noon the heat is unbearable in Babylon. As in the warmer climates it is time for the siesta beneath the cool shade of a tree.

Every day after the visitors had left, Susanna sought refuge from the scorching heat in the shade of the park not far from the house. The woodland was closed in by a high fence around the thicket. The spot was well shielded from the sun by its many trees rich with foliage. Through the middle of the enclosure a small brook gently flowed over the rocks and verdure. It was an ideal spot during the heat of the day. The refreshing waters of the pool, formed by the brook, made a delightful place for bathing. Daily Susanna would retire here for her bath. Two of the Jews, who frequented the home of Joachim, noticed that this was the daily practice of Susanna. They had already been attracted by her great beauty, and evil thoughts began to blind their hearts. Shutting their ears to the whisperings of their conscience, they began to play with the devil. Daily they would hide themselves in order to gaze upon the alluring beauty of Susanna. Secretly they planned to fulfill their evil desires.

Daily burning more vehemently with these evil desires, they could no longer resist and planned to commit their foul deed the following day. After finishing their business with Joachim, they bade each other and the other Jews "goodbye." (Neither of these two had told the other about his desires toward Susanna. Each was too ashamed to do this.) Bidding each other "goodday," they departed in opposite directions, each thinking that the other was on his way home. They were both speechless when they unexpectedly bumped into each other as they rounded the fence just before the gate. Finally, one caught his breath and asked the cause of the other's return. After a long pause each admitted his wicked designs. Then they decided to cast their lots together. They carefully concealed themselves inside the garden gate and waited for the beautiful Susanna to enter the park.

Before long Susanna, with two servant girls, came into the enclosure. After resting comfortably for some time in the refreshing shade of the trees, Susanna decided to take a bath according to her usual practice. Sending her maids for oil and soap, she prepared herself for the bath. Now was the opportunity for iniquity to assert itself. These men, full of guile, bounded from their hiding places and ran to her. Susanna was seized with great fear and shame, being a pure and modest woman. The men tried to induce her to sin with them, but to no avail, for Susanna was a chaste and faithful spouse. Entreaties were turned to threats. "Unless you do, we will bear witness against you, that a young man was with thee, and therefore you sent your maids away from you." Susanna was frightened by the dilemma. If she would consent, then she would sin against the all loving God and prove faithless to her beloved husband. No, that was impossible! But if she refused, then she would be condemned to die for that was the punishment meted out by the Jewish Law for adultery. Then, summing up all her strength, she answered courageously; "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." The men were true to their threats. Running to the gate, they threw it open and called for help. With alarm Joachim and the servants of the house hurried to the gate. Between quick gasps for breath Joachim asked excitedly: "What is wrong?" The old men then graphically told their story. "We were working in the trees here in the garden when your wife, Susanna, came into the park. After some time Susanna sent her slave girls away out of the enclosure. When they had closed the gate behind them, a young man, who had been hiding among the thick bushes, came out to your wife. When we saw the intended crime, we rushed upon them in order to stop them. But the young man overpowered us and leaping up fled out of the park. We demanded to know his name but this woman would not tell us." By this time the other members of the household had arrived upon the scene. They were greatly ashamed and perturbed when they heard this startling news, for until this day no such thing had been said of Susanna.

Susanna's mother led her daughter back to the house in great shame and grief, while Joachim and the others prepared for the trial to be held at Joachim's home the next day. Susanna's mother was perplexed. Her daughter had always been a God-fearing girl and had never caused her parents any trouble. Especially was she pure and chaste.

The mother knew not whether to scold her or to pity her. That night was a sleepless one for Susanna. It seemed as though God had forsaken her. From the looks of things she would face trial early tomorrow morning and be convicted to die that very day. Her death promised to be a disgraceful one in the eyes of her husband and her family. But in all these trials she did not forget God. She recalled those beautiful words of the psalmist: "The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want for nothing. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me." She spent the night in prayer asking Almighty God to give her strength and courage. As dawn broke over the neighboring countryside, Susanna's heart was torn between fear and trust in God. Yet in all these things God did not forsake her.

Then came the long awaited knock. It was time to go. Her father and mother, together with her sisters, and brothers, awaited Susanna at the door. Helcias, her father, encouragingly placed his hand in hers and silently they moved towards the place appointed for the trial. The place chosen was not far from the house. There in an open place sat Joachim and several elders of the Jews who were to act as the principal judges. A great crowd had gathered. When Susanna approached, the crowd, surrounding the judges, stepped aside for her and the members of the family to pass. The reaction of the crowd was not one of reproach but of sympathy. It was hard to believe that this saintly girl had done such a heinous thing. Immediately the two accusers stepped forward. Hatred was burning in their hearts. Placing their hands roughly upon her head they repeated their calumnious story about the adultery. Susanna lifted her eyes to heaven and placed all her hope in the living God. The people laid too much credit to the words of these men because they were elders among the people. After hearing the evidence they cried out: "Let her be stoned. Stone her!" (Stoning was the punishment demanded by the Jewish Law for the sin of adultery.) Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said. "O eternal God, who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass, Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me; and behold I must die, whereas I have done none of these things, which these men have maliciously forged against me!" The people, however, were deaf to the testimony of Susanna, but God was not.

Two of the men present rose up and took Susanna by the arm and, surrounded by the senseless

crowd, led her out to be stoned. The place chosen was not more than half a mile away. It was called "The Pit." The spot was formerly an old quarry where years and years ago the first inhabitants of Babylon unearthed rock for the "Tower of Babel." But before the crowd had gone far, a young boy, by the name of Daniel, cried out: "I am clear from the blood of this woman." What was this! Then one of the accusers of Susanna quickly endeavored to silence the youth, but the people demanded that he be allowed to speak. Then Daniel, surrounded by the people, said: "Are you so foolish, you children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her." The people were won over and excitedly returned to Joachim's house for a new trial. The crowd considered this happening as a signal intervention from Almighty God. Perhaps God was speaking to his people through this young boy. Susanna and her parents were overjoyed. In the face of certain death Susanna had retained her courage and knew that God would manifest His justice. This she felt was God's answer. So with fresh hope they returned to judgment in spite of the violent protests of the wicked men who had borne false witness against her. When the mob had reached the place of trial, Daniel was set in the midst of the judges and elders of Israel and invited to speak. Then Daniel ordered the two men, her accusers, to be separated. Proceeding with uncanny wisdom he began to question the men separately. Finally, Daniel put this question to the accused: "Under what tree did you see Susanna conversing with this young man?" And the old man answered: "Under a mastic tree." Then he was put aside and the other false accuser was brought before Daniel. And Daniel, after other questions, asked him this same clever question: "Under what tree did you see Susanna conversing with this young man?" And he answered unsuspectingly: "Under a holm tree." It was plainly evident to the crowd that Daniel had cleverly caused them to condemn themselves out of their own mouths. With great joy and shouting the crowd took the evil men and led them out to be stoned for bearing false witness to Susanna.

Meanwhile Joachim and the family of Susanna, together with Susanna, returned into the house praising and glorifying God, for God had done a great thing in Israel that day: "THE LORD KEEPETH ALL THEM THAT LOVE HIM: BUT ALL THE WICKED HE WILL DESTROY."



## Give and Take

THE GRAIL will pay five dollars for each letter published in this department. It is our "Open Forum" for our readers and all are invited to express their ideas, whether in conformity with or in divergence to those in the articles of The Grail. The letters must in some way comment on the articles in the magazine.



### MORE ON RACIAL QUESTION

Dear Editor:

Mary N. Seery in her letter to the *Grail* Magazine last December discusses "Colored Domestics." She believes "segregation of the races is necessary if we are to preserve racial characteristics."

Her discussion seems to me illogical, unChristian, and undemocratic. I hereby request to submit a response.

Segregation is an ancient psychological mechanism used by men the world over whenever they desire to shut themselves away from the problems and conditions which they fear and do not feel they have the strength and ability to solve. But segregation is so destructive that in itself it has become a menace to the health of our culture and of individual souls. Father Dunne in the *Sin of Segregation* says: "The mind which is bent upon defending racial segregation is inevitably forced to take refuge in equivocation, subterfuge, evasion, and rationalization. The passage through which this leads is tortuous and labyrinthine, and warps the logical processes of the mind. No conclusion which it reaches, however absorbed, should be surprising."

Many of the advocates of segregation are simply the victims of our poor American education, which always taught our country's superb and idealistic function as the "melting pot," but failed to teach the similarities of the people. This sys-

tem concentrated on the differences. The fact that we are all alike—with the same feelings, power for good, capacity for harm—was lost through the classrooms' attention to dissimilarities. Many people have not had the energy or the will to remedy these educational oversights, and desire to continue to be guided by prejudice instead of truth. Lillian Smith says: "Those who believe in this philosophy of segregation have chosen the schizophrenic way: withdrawing from reality, and this withdrawal has profoundly affected their minds and emotions."

The advocates of racial segregation are prone to consider segregation an economic and political unit, and yell "educate the Negro." They are afraid to face the fact that race prejudice and the culture patterns of segregation which have grown out of their complex feelings about skin color, affects them and their children on every level of life and culture. They fail to realize that a personality cannot grow and mature without self-esteem, feeling of security, faith that he shall be able to live as a human being. No white child educated under segregation can be free of arrogance, hardness of heart, blindness to human needs. Segregation breeds distorted and twisted personalities. Nor do we have the full and mature Negro child under segregation. Full human persons cannot develop as long as they remain in need of that which makes them human.

The race-segregationist has become a stereotyped thinker. Because of the rigid character of his mental processes, which mold the material of experience into fixed channels, the stereotyped thinker does not first see and then define; he always defines first and most of the time never sees at all.

Ultimately, Miss Seery repudiates the teaching of the Church and apparently expresses heretical tendencies by stating: "The Church may favor this sort of thing because she is interested chiefly in souls or she may accept the inevitable and try to make the best of a bad situation; it appears to be up to the laity to look out for the preservation of the white race." But Father Dunne says: "You profess a doctrine which is branded as false by science, forbidden by the inspired word of God, condemned by the Vicar of Christ, and which, by denying that the Negro is a human person—is fully equal to every other human person—violates the fundamental principle of justice."

To be an advocate of racial segregation is to repudiate our Constitution and to deny every syllable of meaning in the story of America. Most people fail to remember that whenever a group is disenfranchised or destroyed, mankind then selects another victim. In such cases it could be themselves. They should realize the truth: those who persecute one group inevitably turn upon another. We condemn the Nazi bigots for their racial ideals and their mass of mere ignorant haters. We sent our boys overseas to destroy these theories, yet we here proclaim those same theories. Yes, racial segregation must go in America just as Nazi racial theories have been vanquished in Europe. The mind that believes in racial segregation has ceased thinking; it is perfectly prepared for the next lie, and the next. We must follow a Man who spent His whole life teaching people the truth about human relationships: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Sincerely yours,

Clifford Thomas  
Chicago, Illinois



## OLD MAGAZINES AND PAPERS

Dear Editor:

This letter does not tie up exactly with any article recently published in *THE GRAIL*, but maybe it is an idea worth passing along.

The other day I saw a pretty and enthusiastic young girl, with her arms filled with copies of *The Daily Worker*. I listened curiously as she held the attention of the small group of pedestrians gathered on the corner. It took but a few words for me to understand that she was only another of the attractive tools the Communists use by the hundreds to spread their doctrine. Perhaps she was sincere in her convictions. Certainly she was enthusiastic, with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause.

Now, though I am just a housewife, I realize how very harmful Communism is. And yet I see one pointer Catholics would do well to take from the deluded Fellow Travelers. Look at their determination and enthusiasm. Think of putting that to work in spreading Christ's kingdom on earth. Wouldn't the Church enter into a period of prosperity if every one of us who know Her merits and value were to exert a little effort toward sharing our convictions with those about us in our work-a-day world?

Of course, as it stands that is nothing but an uplifting thought, too general to contain any workable suggestion. It was only my reaction to the pretty little Communist I chanced upon at the end of the block. It wasn't to take definite shape till later in the day. But it was the starting point for something very practical.

That evening, Mary and Kathleen, two friends of mine, dropped in for a visit. The conversation somehow turned to sending bundles of Catholic publications abroad. It was then that the full flower of my idea burst into being.

"If you find yourself with a surplus of religious magazines and literature, why not take a copy or two and leave them on the bus every day?" I suggested. "That's one way

at least of helping make Christ better known among folks who seldom hear His Name except in blasphemy."

"Why, that's a swell idea," my friends chorused. "That's one branch of Catholic Action that is open to everyone."

Even after subjecting the scheme to a series of second thoughts, it still seemed fairly sound. Then, as if in confirmation, I soon had a little experience that convinced me it was. When taking a streetcar home from town the other day, I happened to sit next to a mother with a little girl on her lap. Being the friendly type, she chatted with me about this and that until finally we worked around to religion. When I told her I was a Catholic, she expressed the pleasure she had experienced in learning a little of the Catholic teaching through a paper she found. Although she was a practicing member of some Protestant sect, her interest in the Catholic Faith had been

aroused by the explanation of some puzzling things that were clarified in that "found" paper.

That settled it for me. I was pleased, too,—pleased that this kindly person had come into contact with the truth at last. And also pleased to observe my theory working with results that were up to expectations. Perhaps, though, it was just a coincidence. Perhaps this was one case in a thousand. At any rate, until actual facts prove something to the contrary, I think it well worth the try. Especially since a little interest and enthusiasm are the only necessities to put the whole scheme into execution. So, from now on, when I'm bundling my waste paper for the government, I'm going to be very careful not to include any Catholic literature, especially magazines and similar publications. I have a much better use for them now. For the glory of God, I leave them on the bus.

Dolores Green  
Washington, D. C.



In North Carolina it's forbidden to hunt with a dog on Sunday.

In Georgia no one may bathe in a stream or pond on Sunday where people on their way to church may see them.



In Quitman, Georgia, it's against the law for a chicken (feathered variety) to cross a road within the city limits.

## SPIRIT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ORDER OF THE BROTHERS OF MERCY

Buffalo, N. Y.

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*Assistant Novicemaster*

Ninety years of pious prayers and work in the service of the suffering humanity have passed since the foundation of our Congregation. It was in the souls of simple, plain men that the thought arose to serve God in His poor and suffering, and these thoughts have been realized. Unconcerned as to whether they were acknowledged, the Brothers went their way, for they recognized God's Will in what they were doing. Interior and exterior difficulties were not wanting, but, with patience and indefatigable labor, and especially God's help, they were overcome.

The Congregation originated June 29, 1856, at Hadamar, Diocese of Limburg, and from there spread to all parts of the world. From Limburg (Germany) they wandered abroad to Holland and to North America. Their work is to serve the sick, and in the first place those who are helpless and in need. This is the exterior purpose of the Congregation. However, the Congregation is not merely an assemblage of lay nurses. It is a Religious Congregation. The care of the sick is founded on religious principles, was born of the love of God, and is an expression of this love of God. The Brothers serve humanity and see in the sick the Person of their Lord and Saviour. Their whole life is penetrated with this ideal. Therefore, prayer is most important in their lives. Public and private, verbal and mental prayers comprise a large portion of the day. In the morning at Holy Mass and Holy Communion they gain strength for their religious duties. Often during the day, when free, they return to greet Him, their hidden Lord in the Tabernacle, there to renew their love and gratitude for their Vocation. This spirit of prayer does not hinder their work. On the contrary, it glorifies and sanctifies it.

The Brothers leave the world and its pleasures behind in order to seek the Will of God by subordination to their rules and to the will of their Superior. Prayer, Obedience, Silence, Work—these are the pillars of their lives. The world can scarcely grasp or understand such a life, but it must acknowledge that a work which grows on such a foundation is of great social significance.

What the Brothers have accomplished is written in the Book of Life—we cannot present this in detail. But if we are to give any figures, let it be a glance at the activities of the past ten years: Nursed sick in private homes, 39,813, with 473,959 night watches; visits and help given, 680,496; care in hospitals and institutions, 71,726, comprising 9,831,690 days spent in nursing.

This will certainly give us a glimpse of the work done by the Brothers. Where State or other help was refused, there, the Brothers laid hold. In accordance with the aim of their foundation, to serve the poor, they helped especially those who were considered useless and who were driven out of society. Cripples, the insane, epileptics, were especially received and cared for, because they too have a soul with a spark of divinity, be it ever so hidden. How much misery have the Brothers of Mercy relieved in those 90 years! How many whose lives had been crushed as it were, have found relief and peace; how many a workman has been given back to his family, healthy in body and soul, how many during their stay in the hospital, have been edified at the simple life of the Brothers and were thus renewed in their esteem for religion.

At the present time there is a tendency to urge man to work for material gain, the duty of every Christian is to serve his brethren. In a world that measures success by material things, the Brothers show that charity is above all. Thus they become apostles and messengers of Christ, not only in words but in deeds.

The congregation began to operate at the time that Bishop Peter Blum began his work of restoration in the Diocese of Limburg. Herein the Brothers were co-workers in the renewal of the Christian life, and also witnesses to the new spirit which entered the country through the efforts of the great Bishop. They ranked next to the Sisters of Dernbach (Poor handmaids of Jesus Christ) who, likewise, worked successfully in the building up of Catholic life.

The example of these simple men who came from the ranks of the worker and the business man, to live only for God and His Church, edified the faithful and assisted the Bishop's endeavors to raise the standard of the religious and civic life. This endeavor on the part of the Brothers did not cease at the death of Bishop Blum. Wherever they have established themselves, there they have become an important factor in fostering the religious life, and they will continue to do this as long as they live up to the ideals and purposes of their Congregation, not as a mighty power, spoken of by everyone, but as a silent, hidden, effective power.

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## THE FIRST SATURDAY OF JUNE IS JUNE 1st

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### *THE PROMISE OF THE BLESSED MOTHER*

*for the*

### *FIRST FIVE SATURDAYS*

"I promise at the hour of death to help with the graces needed for their salvation, whoever on the first Saturday of five consecutive month, shall confess and receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary with the intention of making reparation to me."

*The Blessed Mother at Fatima on June 13th, 1917.*

Note: In a later revelation the Blessed Mother explained that the Confession may be made during the eight days before or after the Communion on the first Saturday of the month. The Rosary (five decades) may be recited at any convenient time on the First Saturday; also the fifteen minute meditation may be made at any convenient time of that day, either on all of the mysteries as a whole, or on one special mystery.

Leaflets that briefly tell the story of Our Lady's appearances at Fatima, Portugal, with a little chart for keeping count of the First Saturdays, and also containing the Litany of the Immaculate Heart of Mary are available from THE GRAIL Office, St. Meinrad, Indiana for 35¢ per hundred leaflets. Although the Blessed Mother appeared in 1917, it was only recently that what she revealed has been made public. Thus you are asked to promote the knowledge of the messages of the Blessed Mother by these little leaflets.

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## BEGIN YOUR FIRST SATURDAY ON JUNE 1st

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